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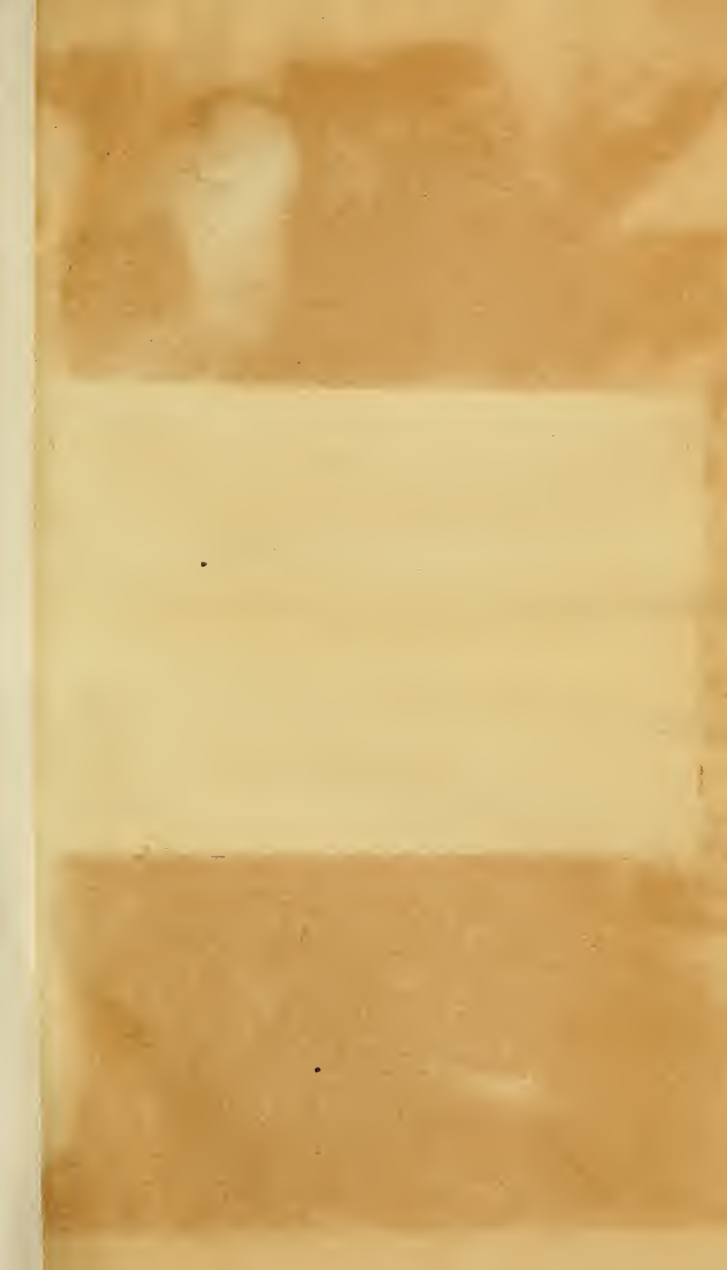
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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
THE PARABLES
AND OF OTHER PARTS OF
THE GOSPELS,

BY EDWARD GRESWELL, B. D.
FELLOW OF C. C. C. OXFORD.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

OXFORD:
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PREFACE.

SO many excellent works upon the parables in general, and so many admirable discourses in explanation of particular parables, are already before the religious world, that no part of the New Testament would seem to stand less in need of further elucidation. The peculiarly interesting character of the parabolic mode of teaching—the simplicity, pathos, and elegance of these narratives—the valuable uses to which they are practically subservient—the isolated position of each of the number, which makes its introduction into the body of the gospel-history, a kind of episode in the sacred text, whence it is easy to detach it, for the purpose of commenting upon it, illustrating, and explaining it by itself: these, and other considerations which might readily be suggested to account for the fact, have naturally contributed to direct the attention of expositors and readers, perhaps more exclusively to the parables, than to any part of the gospels besides.

Under these circumstances, the author of the following work, cannot but feel that some apology will be expected from him, for venturing to lay before the religious public, a new attempt at an Exposition of the Parables; which, at first sight, would seem either needlessly to go over ground again which has already been fully explored, or virtually to call in question the sufficiency of former works of the same description.

In defence of himself against these imputations, he would reply first, that as the Exposition which he now submits to

the judgment of the Christian world, will perhaps be found, to be upon the whole a *new* one, and not such as has been anticipated by any former undertaking of the same kind; he hopes it will not be said to have been *superfluous*, unless the principles on which it proceeds, are founded in error: secondly, that as in a great measure independent of former expositions, and constructed upon a plan entirely new, he also hopes, without in the slightest degree disparaging the value and utility of those expositions, that the present one may possess an use and advantage of its own.

To enter at large into a statement of the reasons which induced him to embark upon the present undertaking, would both occupy too much of the reader's time, and probably be a very uninteresting detail to any but the author himself. It is enough to observe, that if those views, respecting the distinction of kinds in the parables, and the corresponding distinction in the uses and purposes to which these kinds were respectively designed to be subservient, which he has laboured to establish in his General Introduction, are admitted to be just and reasonable; he feels assured that he shall stand acquitted of the charge of presumption, or of obtruding an unnecessary work upon the religious world, in the composition and publication of a new Exposition of the Parables, according to the principles which he has laid down.

To what portions of the gospel-narrative, the author considers the name of Parables properly to belong, will appear from the list of such as he proposed to explain, given in the first chapter of his General Introduction. The three volumes which are at present published, bring down this Exposition to the seventeenth in that list, the parable of the prodigal son. The remaining ten parables, are reserved for explanation in the two concluding volumes;

the publication of which, it is hoped, will follow within a reasonable distance of time, upon that of the preceding three.

Besides the exposition of these parables, the present work comprehends detailed explanations of other parts of our Saviour's discourses, recorded in the gospels. The rule which the author laid down for his observance, was, that where a parable occurred in connexion with another discourse, he would explain the matter preliminary to it, as well as the parable. The observance of this rule has required him to comment, in the course of the present three volumes, upon Matthew xviii. and Luke xii. almost from first to last; upon John x, Luke x. xiii. xiv. and xv, either wholly or in part: and in the course of his next two volumes, it will require him to explain, in like manner, Luke xvi. xvii. and xviii: besides those portions of the three Gospels, St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, and St. Luke's, respectively, which relate to the prophecy upon the mount.

In giving admission to so much additional matter, the author trusts to the candour of his readers, that he shall not be thought to have unnecessarily enlarged the plan of his work, or to have departed too widely from the proper design of his undertaking—an Exposition of the Parables; for it will be seen that even these explanations are not without their use and advantage, for the consideration of the parables themselves. If no explanation of any part of our Saviour's discourses can be considered unnecessary *per se*, independently of its connexion with other matter, whether delivered at the same time and place, or not—the more of the substance of these discourses a particular exposition embraces, the more useful and serviceable, if not the more interesting, it is calculated to become. Upon the *principle* therefore of the admission of such correlative matter for

explanation, even into a professed exposition of the parables, there will probably not be much difference of opinion between the author and his readers: as to the merits of these explanations, he leaves them to be determined upon, in common with those of the rest of his work, according to the judgment of his readers. Yet the nature of the subject-matter upon which these collateral expositions turn, is such as to give occasion for the discussion of some very important and interesting questions, leading in its results to conclusions in a great measure new, in comparison of the preexisting opinions on such points; more especially in Matthew xviii: Luke xii: and in those parts of the different gospels which relate to the prophecy delivered upon the mount.

On this subject, the author may perhaps be allowed to observe, that the present work, and his former publication on the Principles and Arrangement of an Harmony of the Gospels, are so intimately connected together, not only in the circumstance that the first conception of the latter work arose out of the commencement of the other^a, but in the constant reference which the execution of the present undertaking required him to make to his former publication; that he trusts he shall be excused, if he wishes them to be considered as virtually one work, distributed into two parts. Taken together, they will be found to constitute almost a perpetual commentary on the text of the gospels; of which there is little, whether in reference to facts or to discourses, which does not come under consideration in one or other of them. The same may be said of their relation to the Acts of the Apostles, and to many parts of the Epistles.

From an earnest wish on the part of the author, that his work, under the blessing of the Divine providence, might be-

^a Vide the Preface to the former work, page iv.

come as generally useful as possible, and be equally accessible to readers of every description, he has carefully abstained from introducing into the body of the text, whatsoever was not calculated for general readers; reserving all matter of that description, either for the notes subjoined to the text, or for the Appendix, which will form a portion of his last volume. In translating too, into English, the passages which he has had occasion to produce either from the fathers or from classical authorities, he has made a point of adhering as closely as possible to the letter of the originals, and of sacrificing even elegance, if necessary, to fidelity and exactness, that the unlearned reader might be as competent to judge of the true sense and meaning of such passages, as the learned. For the same reason also, he has taken the liberty of departing from the words of the Bible translation, in rendering the text of the several parables, or in citing other parts of the New Testament: if by that means the version might be made, in his opinion, more *literally* exact and faithful: however correctly the *general* sense of the original, might have been represented in the English Bible.

Whether the author will stand excused for having devoted an entire volume of his work to the Introduction merely, will depend upon the judgment which his readers will form for themselves, on the nature, propriety, or necessity of the questions, therein discussed; considered as preliminary to the ultimate design and effect of the whole, the Exposition of the Parables. On none of these points would he desire to offer any observations at present, except upon what relates to the "method of treating of the parables." The plan, which it appeared to him most advisable, or rather which alone, consistently with his own principles, he was at liberty to adopt for that purpose, was to distribute the consideration of each parable under three general heads: the

first in reference to its material circumstances, the second to its moral or import, the third to its interpretation or its application. By the material circumstances, the reader will of course understand nothing to be meant, but simply the details, circumstances, or particulars of the narrative in each instance; in one word, the subject-matter of the parabolic history. In executing this part of his plan, the author feels it necessary to observe, that he had to contend with a difficulty, greater indeed in some instances than in others, yet more or less sensibly felt in all, because founded in the nature of the case; viz. that in endeavouring, conformably with his plan, to explain and unfold the material structure of each parable more circumstantially and more in detail, than it had been related in the original, he was laid under the necessity of attempting to render more simple, perspicuous, and natural, a series of particulars already so probable and so simple, that no explanation apparently could make them more so.

Another practical inconvenience which could not but be sensibly felt in the execution of a work like the present, according to the prescribed plan, was that in those cases, where the nature of the parable required the facts and circumstances of the material history, as previously explained and illustrated in the first part, to be *interpreted* in the third part—much of the substance of the first part would require to be repeated in the third. There was no means of avoiding this necessity: for how was the prophetic character of the parable to be ultimately cleared up and explained; or how was the language of allegory to be translated into that of simple history, except by confronting the text with the interpretation, or bringing the statements of the allegorical narrative into juxtaposition with the facts of the real history, which answered to them? The only remedy, therefore, for a practical inconvenience like this,

was that which the author has uniformly endeavoured to adopt; viz. to be as brief and summary as possible in those references to the material circumstances, with which the reader was already acquainted from the exposition, while he enlarged upon the facts of the reality corresponding to them, which had not yet been pointed out.

Among the other topics discussed in the preliminary part of the work, the reader will find the most considerable portion of the first volume devoted to the support of a doctrine, the mention of which will either provoke a smile at the credulity of its advocate, or will at once rivet the attention of the reader, as worthy of his most serious consideration—the doctrine of the millennium: a doctrine which, if founded in truth, according to the views which the author of this work has laboured to establish, nothing can exceed in interest and importance; while, if it is founded in error and mistake, nothing ought more justly to expose its champion to the charge of folly and delusion.

Ample as that share of attention, which his belief in the truth of this doctrine, and its connexion with the proper subject of his work, has induced him to bestow upon it, may appear to be; he is well aware that he has not done justice to the importance of the subject, nor entered at large upon every topic of discussion connected with it. Such is the coherency of the whole scheme of prophetic revelation, with regard to a common subject, the events which are yet to happen before the end of the world, and the consummation of all things; and such the dependence of one part upon another, that the due examination of the testimony of prophecy to this one doctrine of the millennium, would require a synoptic review of all the unfulfilled prophecies, whether in the Old or in the New Testament, whatever be the subjects to which they immediately relate: and

though the outline and general principles of such an undertaking, according to the views of the author of the present work, may be collected from his disquisition upon the millennium, yet the filling up of that outline, and the application of those principles to particulars, would obviously be employment enough for a distinct work.

Though the question of the right or the wrong interpretation of many parts of scripture, is intimately connected with that of the truth or the falsehood of the millenary doctrines; it is after all, chiefly in reference to the prophetic parts of scripture. The doctrine of the millennium is so far a speculative question; upon which, though the truth must lie on one side only, yet there is no reason why great latitude and diversity of sentiment may not be innocently and safely allowed to different minds. This is not essentially a question of such a description, that no compromise, concession, or toleration can be allowed between opposite opinions concerning it, without the sacrifice of some main article of Christian faith or of Christian duty. Many one there may have been among Christians, both in ancient and in modern times, who never heard of the millennium, or never, except to class it with the number of dreams and fables; who yet, if they have been but good men and orthodox believers in other respects, may find themselves possessed of a blessed interest in its reality, and may stand in their lot, at the end of the days.

The true view of the millenary dispensation, in the opinion of the author of the present work, is that of a scheme interposed, for special reasons and for a particular purpose, between the end of time and the beginning of eternity: a scheme of finite duration, and therefore however considerable *per se*, and however incalculable to merely human apprehensions, yet absolutely no more than a point

of time, or even as nothing, in comparison of eternity: a scheme, whatever may be the kind or degree of the blessings, reserved for the enjoyment of the good and faithful during its existence—however exquisite while they last—however incommensurate to any thing that can be conceived or enjoyed upon earth, as at present constituted—yet immeasurably below the bliss of heaven, and absolutely incapable of comparison with the transaction of an immortality of happiness through all eternity. Moreover the same good qualities—the same faith, the same piety, the same holiness, patience, and perseverance—which are necessary for each Christian's enjoyment, in his due proportion, of the millenary reward, are equally essential to the inheritance of the blessedness of eternity in heaven; and the absence of such personal good qualities as would be the means of exclusion from the former, will infallibly exclude from the latter also. How unreasonable therefore must it be, to allow a difference of opinion upon this point, to interfere with the mutual charity and good understanding which should naturally subsist among Christians who agreed, in every other respect, to believe and to act alike! how much to be regretted, that there should be any among the professors of a common faith, who would not give the right hand of fellowship to such as did not concur with them in this article of their belief; or others, who, in their turn, would not say God speed, to such of their brethren as entertained it. How much better, that while we each of us strive, by the aid of God's grace in conjunction with our own weak, but sincere and unremitting endeavours, to make our own calling and election sure—and thereby to secure our individual share in the benefit of every dispensation of good, whether in time or for eternity, which the divine bounty may yet have in store for them that love God, and trust for every thing to his mercy, through Jesus Christ their Lord—we should allow to others

the same liberty and independence of opinion, which we claim for ourselves; and while we harmonize together upon the essential points of a saving faith and a salutary practice, that with reference to such questions as these, we should say with Jerome, *Unusquisque abundet in sensu suo, et cuncta Domini judicio reserventur.*

As to the author of the following work—if he has fallen into any material error, either upon this point, or upon any other on which he has ventured to express an opinion of his own—God is his record, that it has been unintentionally, and while humbly endeavouring to see his way, and to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, by the light of God's word, and by the aid of the other means and opportunities which the Divine providence had bestowed upon him. In a word, to whatever extent the ensuing pages are calculated to mislead their readers—let the blame of all, and the demerit of all, be set down to the account of human ignorance and human infirmity: to whatever degree they may conduce to promote the great ends of scriptural truth, let their readers concur as heartily as their author, to ascribe the praise and glory of all, to the true source of the benefit and advantage redounding from all, the Father of lights and the Giver of every good gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The editions of the several works referred to in the course of this volume, or of the ensuing ones, will be found specified at the end of the fifth volume.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAP. I.

On the number, and the names, of the parables P. 1

CHAP. II.

On the division and classification of the parables 18

CHAP. III.

On the final end proposed by the use of parables 38

CHAP. IV.

On the first cause of the use of parables, or the reasons which produced them 55

CHAP. V.

Why the use of parables is peculiar to the Gospels. 69

CHAP. VI.

Whether the parables are real or fictitious narratives? 82

CHAP. VII.

On the allusions to the domestic relations of antiquity, which occur in the parables 96

CHAP. VIII.

- On the distinction of the members, or component parts of the visible church ; and on the figurative or parabolic mode of denominating them respectively 99

CHAP. IX.

- On the œconomy of probation, and its counterpart, the œconomy of retribution 105

CHAP. X.

- On the various senses of the phrase, Kingdom of Heaven. . . 120

CHAP. XI.

- On the method observed in treating of the parables 129

CHAP. XII.

PART I.

- On the millennium, and the scriptural testimonies to the doctrine of it 140

CHAP. XII.

PART II.

- On the millennium. Historical testimonies to the antiquity of the doctrine 273

CHAP. XII.

PART III.

- On the millennium. Objections to the doctrine; and uses to which the interposition of the millenary œconomy is subservient 412

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

On the number, and the names, of the parables.

IN pursuance of my design, which is the exposition of the parables, I shall lay before the reader a statement of all those parts of our Saviour's discourses, to which I consider the name of parables to be properly applicable, and of which only he will find any explanation in the course of the ensuing work.

The following Table or Synopsis will shew their numerical amount, their respective denominations, the times when and the places where they were delivered, as far as these admit of being determined; and the evangelists, whether one or more, by whom they are recorded. For the verification of these particulars, I am spared the necessity of any lengthened discussion, by having it in my power to refer to my "Harmonia Evangelica" or Harmony of the Gospels; and the Dissertations on the principles and arrangement of such a work, which were published as an accompaniment to it. To this work I shall take the liberty of referring, as often as I find occasion to assume the truth of the conclusions which I there endeavoured to establish.

TABULAR VIEW OF THE PARABLES.

<i>Number—Order—Name.</i>	<i>Time.</i>	<i>Place.</i>	<i>Historians.</i>
I. Parable of the sower. ^a	A. D. 28. Middle of the second year of our Saviour's ministry.	Lake of Galilee.	Matthew, Mark, Luke.
II. Parable of the tares. ^b	—	—	Matthew.
III. Parable of the seed growing secretly. ^b	—	—	Mark.
IV. Parable of the mustard seed. ^b	—	—	Matthew, Mark.
V. Parable of the leaven. ^b	—	—	Matthew.
VI. Parable of the hidden treasure. ^c	—	Capernaum.	—
VII. Parable of the pearl. ^c	—	—	—
VIII. Parable of the draw-net, cast into the sea. ^c	—	—	—
IX. Parable of the king, that took account of his servants. ^d	A. D. 29. Middle of our Saviour's third year.	—	—
X. Parable of the good shepherd. ^e	—	The temple.	John.
XI. Parable of the good Samaritan. ^f	A. D. 30. Last three months of our Saviour's third year.	Galilee.	Luke.
XII. Parable of the rich man's ground. ^g	—	—	—
XIII. Parable of the servants left in wait for their lord. ^g	—	—	—

^a See my Harm. P. iii. 16.^b Ibid. 17.^c Ibid. 18.^d Ibid. P. iv. 15.^e Ibid. 20.^f Ibid. 27.^g Ibid. 32.

<i>Number—Order—Name.</i>	<i>Time.</i>	<i>Place.</i>	<i>Historians.</i>
XIV. Parable of the servant, left instead of his lord. g	A. D. 30. Last three months of our Saviour's third year.	Galilee.	Luke.
XV. Parable of the barren fig tree. h	————	————	————
XVI. Parable of the great supper. i	————	————	————
XVII. Parable of the prodigal son. k	————	————	————
XVIII. Parable of the unjust steward. l	————	————	————
XIX. Parable of the rich man and Lazarus. l	————	————	————
XX. Parable of the importunate widow. m	————	Peræa.	————
XXI. Parable of the Pharisee and publican. n	————	————	————
XXII. Parable of the labourers in the vineyard. o	Friday, March 29.	————	Matthew.
XXIII. Parable of the ten pieces of money, or the pounds. p	————	Judæa. House of Zacchæus.	Luke.
XXIV. Parable of the wicked husbandmen, or of the vineyard. q	Wednesday, in Passion Week. April 3.	The temple.	Matthew, Mark, Luke.
XXV. Parable of the marriage of the king's son, or of the wedding garment. r	————	————	Matthew.
XXVI. Parable of the ten virgins. s	————	Mount Olivet.	————
XXVII. Parable of the talents. s	————	————	————

g Harm. P. iv. 32. h Ibid. 33. i Ibid. 39. k Ibid. 42.
 l Ibid. 43. m Ibid. 48. n Ibid. 49. o Ibid. 54. p Ibid. 60.
 q Ibid. 68. r Ibid. 69. s Ibid. 79.

Upon the preceding summary a few remarks are requisite, before we can proceed to any other considerations. As first; if every passage of our Saviour's discourses to which the word parable, or the phrase, "He spake a parable," is premised; or which appears to partake of the nature of a parable, were necessarily to be included among the Gospel parables, the reader would no doubt be surprised at many omissions in the above account. Such are the passages noted below^t; none of which do I conceive to answer to the description of a regular parable; and my reasons for excepting them will be stated in a more convenient place elsewhere.

Again, the fourth and fifth parables in the Table, both of which were recorded, as they were first delivered, only by St. Matthew, occur again at a later period in the Gospel history, though in the same order of succession, and almost word for word the same as before; viz. Luke xiii. 18—21.^u Should any one, then, choose to consider these numerically distinct parables, he might add them as such to the list, and so increase the entire amount by two; but the explanation which must be given of them, on the second occasion of their occurrence, would still be the same as that which would require to be given on the first.

In like manner, the fourteenth parable, which, as delivered on the first occasion, was recorded solely by St. Luke, is repeated on a later occasion^x, Matt.

^t Luke iv. 23; v. 36; vi. 39; vii. 41—43; xiv. 7; Mark iii. 23; Matt. xii. 43—45. or Luke xi. 24—26; Matt. xv. 15; Mark vii. 17; Luke xv. 3—10; Matt. xxi. 28—32; Matt. xxiv. 32; Mark xiii. 28; Luke xxi. 29; Vide Appendix, chapter I.

^u Harm. P. iv. 35.

^x Harm. P. iv. 79.

xxiv. 45—51. in terms still more nearly resembling the language of the former account. The same thing is true in part even of the thirteenth parable, as related by St. Luke; in whose account of it, ch. xii. 39, 40. has a great verbal resemblance to Matt. xxiv. 43, 44. recorded on a later occasion^y. Were any one so inclined, he might reckon these also numerically distinct parables, and so increase the entire amount by two more: but he could not consider them distinct, with regard to their moral and explanation. The parables, therefore, which really contain a difference of meaning, and of which a distinct explanation will consequently be necessary, are after all only twenty-seven; the first, the parable of the sower, and the last, the parable of the talents: between which, in point of time, there was probably eighteen months' interval.

As to the names of the parables in question, so much deference perhaps is due to established usage, that we should retain, if possible, the titles, which are generally adopted: though it cannot be denied that these titles have not been framed in every instance with all the regard to propriety, which was desirable. Mere disputes about words indeed, are neither interesting nor profitable, except as they affect the right estimation of things of importance; otherwise it might easily be shewn that the received denominations of the parables were fixed upon, in most instances, from some misconstruction of their scope and constitution; and are well calculated to perpetuate similar mistakes.

For example, the first of the number is commonly called the parable of the sower; though in the sum-

^y Harm. P. iv. 78.

mary of the English Bible, premised to Matt. xiii. &c. it is styled, with more attention to exactness, the parable of the sower and the seed. In this parable, however, the abstract character and relation of the sower are the least important circumstance of the history. It is devoted to the account of the fortunes of one and the same kind of seed, according as it fell on the various possible situations of one and the same field, or tract of ground. By what hand it was previously scattered, so as to light upon any one of those situations, was of little consequence to the kind of fortune which it afterwards experienced there.

The usual name of the next parable leaves out of sight the existence of *good* grain, as well as bad, within the same field which contained the bad; of good grain too, sown by the proprietor of the field in his *own* field, and bad grain, scattered by an enemy of the owner in a field which was not his own; the former, sown first and in the regular way, and always designed to have gone on growing in its proper field, until it arrived at maturity; the latter, introduced clandestinely afterwards, for the express purpose of vitiating the good,—and, even when discovered in the same field, tolerated there only for its sake.

The denomination of the parable of the prodigal son has a similar tendency to make it be forgotten that there was another son of the same father, besides the prodigal; not a *younger* son, as he was, but possessing the birthright of primogeniture; nor ever an outcast from his father's family, like him, but always an inmate of his native home; whose history, from first to last, is interwoven with that of

his brother, and while it accompanies it, is by no means inferior in importance to it.

The name of the parable of the ten pieces of money, or as it is also called, of the pounds, is so much the more objectionable, by how much the more unquestionable it is of this parable, in particular, that besides the history of the pounds, that is of the scheme and œconomy of probation involved in the commission of sums of money, denoted by pounds, to a certain description of persons—another history is combined in the same narrative, which affects a very different person from those who are concerned in the history of the pounds; to which too, the scheme of probation, exemplified in the commission and trust of the pounds, is entirely subservient, and has no use nor meaning of its own, except in reference to it.

It appears from the above review of the parables in general, that the historians of these parts of our Saviour's discourses in almost every instance are one or more of the three first of the evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. Does no parable, then, nor any thing which properly resembles one, occur in the Gospel of St. John?

If by this question, it is meant, whether any such parables as occur in the other evangelists, are to be met with in St. John; parables, of which the most general and indiscriminate idea would be, that they are histories of facts, or narratives of some kind or other—the answer must be in the negative. Not one such narrative occurs in the Gospel of St. John. The very word which we render by parable, so common in the other evangelists, is not to be found in St. John: and instead of that, he employs a term,

which is equally unknown to the rest ; that, which we translate by proverb.

If, however, we are to understand by the name of parable, any figurative or allegorical discourse, whether it contains a history of facts or not ; then we may reply in the affirmative, that not only does much parabolic matter occur in St. John, but also what may be considered almost tantamount to a regular parable—a figurative description of the character, properties, and relations, of the great Christian Shepherd of the sheep, so exact and definite as justly to place it among the series of parables, which we proposed in our list for future explanation. What particular difference there may be, between the use and purpose of the proverb of St. John, and the parable of the other evangelists, we shall find an opportunity of pointing out elsewhere.

It appears, moreover, that of the twenty-seven parables, some are recorded by each of the evangelists, but all by no one of them ; St. Matthew in particular has given us thirteen ; St. Mark, four ; and St. Luke, fourteen : it appears also that each of the evangelists has one or more parables, peculiar to his narrative, St. Matthew ten, St. Mark one, and St. Luke twelve ; but that all of them relate only two parables in common, the parable of the sower, and the parable of the wicked husbandmen.

It appears, likewise, that the first occasion when our Saviour delivered a parable, was not earlier than the second feast of tabernacles ; a period, remarkable as being the middle point in the duration of his personal ministry : and the last occasion was as late as the Wednesday in Passion week, two days before he suffered ; a day, which is further remark-

able as the last of his public ministry,—on which he closed that ministry itself. Each of these instances is observable as one when he taught in parables deliberately, and of his own accord; not, as upon other occasions, on the spur of the moment, or in consequence of something which had just occurred: when he taught in parables *ex cathedra*, that is in lieu of his usual method of teaching: and lastly, when he taught the multitude or people in general, and not his disciples in particular. Each of them accordingly is specified by the three evangelists as something remarkable in itself; and what was then said, and in that way, was considered worthy to be related more or less in common by them all.

There can be no doubt that the former of these occasions was the first, in the course of our Saviour's ministry, upon which he was known as yet to have taught in parables. There is not a hint nor a vestige of a parable properly so called, in the record of his discourses up to that time; and the question which was expressly put by the apostles, in consequence of his teaching in parables then, and which was expressly answered to them, to explain the grounds of what he was doing, must satisfy any reasonable mind, that what Jesus had just been doing, was something which he had never done before; that the method of teaching which he had just been using was, until then, singular, novel, and unprecedented; and therefore, no unreasonable ground of surprise to his hearers. There is still less room for doubting that the latter occasion was the last, on which he could have taught officially either in parables, or in any other manner. After quitting

the temple in the evening of that day, and closing its proceedings with the discourse upon mount Olivet, we do not know that he was even seen in public again, until the morning of his trial and crucifixion.

With regard to intermediate instances of the same kind of teaching, (if any such there were,) between the first employment of parables, in the middle of our Saviour's ministry, and the arrival of the third feast of tabernacles, a full year afterwards; we have no evidence in any of the Gospels that he again resorted to that method of teaching, or added a single parable to the eight first which were consecutively delivered, and are left consecutively on record. No such additional parable can be produced from any of the evangelists, up to the time when we meet with the ninth in our list, the parable of the unmerciful creditor, or of the king that took account of his debtors.

To suppose that in the mean time, our Lord was altogether silent in the use of parables, would imply that the account of his parables, which we actually possess, is an account of all that he actually delivered; a supposition, the truth of which may justly be considered doubtful. Yet it is some ground of presumption in favour of its probability, that the next parable on record, though not met with until the distance of a year's interval from the first, was, as we shall see hereafter, a new species of parable, like unto which though more came to be afterwards delivered, none, that we know of, had been pronounced before. To admit, too, the fact of our Lord's silence in the use of parables, from the middle of his ministry up to its last six months; a probable reason not only for the resumption of the same mode

of teaching in general, but with a new class and description of the instances of its application in particular, seems to be hinted at in the parable of the fig-tree planted in the vineyard; the consideration of which will come in its proper place hereafter. It is certain, at least, that from the time of resuming the use of parables, at the period in question, if we except the eight which had been delivered a year before, all the parables on record in each of the Gospels (nineteen out of the twenty-seven) were at different periods delivered; seventeen of them in the last three months of our Saviour's ministry, and probably nearer to the end than to the beginning of that time: of which number too, as comprehended between these extremes, twelve are peculiar to the narrative of St. Luke.

With respect indeed to the question, to which we alluded above, whether the parables actually recorded may be considered, on probable grounds, to be all which our Saviour actually delivered—it may be said, that the question itself is more curious than useful; since nothing of practical importance to the understanding of the parables actually recorded, depends on their being considered all that were actually delivered, or not: or that, however necessary and useful in that point of view, it is still a question which we can never decide in either way, with certainty. As matter of opinion, however, I am inclined to believe that in the account of the parables on record, from the time when parables began to be delivered, we have an account of all, or nearly all, which the history of our Saviour's discourses could furnish.

It is true that St. Mark closed his account of the

parables delivered upon that first occasion, with the general declaration; “And in many such parables “ did he speak the word unto them. . . . But without “ a parable did he not speak unto them ^z :” from which it seems to be a natural inference that he knew more parables to have been actually then delivered, than he himself has actually recorded. But to this objection we might reply, that St. Matthew had anticipated St. Mark in giving an account of five more parables, delivered at the same time and on the same occasion, as the three which are related by St. Mark; and to these he may be understood to refer, as the instances of those other such like parables or comparisons, which were actually now pronounced, though not actually now, by him in particular, recorded. Such omissions in the relation of our Lord’s discourses, either wholly or in part, are in fact familiar to St. Mark, especially where St. Matthew had already recorded those discourses.

It will perhaps be further objected, that the reference in St. Mark is obviously to be understood of parables, which were delivered in the audience of the people, though they are not by him recorded as delivered; whereas, of the five parables, supplied by St. Matthew, three at least were pronounced to the disciples of our Lord in private. But the other two were certainly delivered in public; and one of them, the second on our list, was a parable of much greater length, and variety of circumstances, and altogether more calculated to affect the hearers with surprise and admiration, than any other, delivered on the same occasion.

And should it be again objected, that one parable,

^z Mark iv. 33.

or two merely, cannot with propriety be understood to be meant by a reference to *many*; still we may reasonably contend that the particular kind of parables which St. Mark alludes to as now delivered, though not recorded, must have been the same in general of which he had previously given an example; parables, not in the form and manner of circumstantial historical narratives, but consisting of some one simple and familiar, though pregnant and sententious comparison: the use of which, as there is good reason to suppose, was confined to this first occasion, if we except the repetition of the fourth and fifth of the number by St. Luke.

But the conclusion that the parables, which are actually found on record, are to be considered, on that account, all which our Lord can be supposed to have delivered, may be said to rest on a precarious assumption, for this reason; that, had we possessed only the Gospel of St. Matthew, we must have concluded, on the same principle, that all the parables which our Saviour actually delivered were the thirteen recorded by St. Matthew: had we possessed the single Gospel of St. Mark, we might have inferred that their number was but four: had we had only St. Luke's Gospel to refer to, we should have reckoned them at fourteen: each of which conclusions would obviously have been wide of the truth.

It is to be remembered, however, that we actually possess not one Gospel, but four; that these several histories were written not only by different authors, and at different times, but in their present order; and that there is clear internal evidence in their mutual relations to each other, that a later Gospel was in

a variety of instances supplementary to a prior. Though, therefore, any one of the number by itself might have been an incomplete, and perhaps an inadequate account of the Gospel ministry; yet all four, taken together, must and do contain as much of it, as it concerned the great ends of scriptural truth to be made known. The very circumstance that St. Mark specially adds one parable to the thirteen recorded by St. Matthew; and that St. Luke adds twelve to the fourteen related conjointly by St. Matthew and St. Mark; while St. John supplies one at least in addition to the twenty-six recorded by his predecessors in conjunction; is presumptively a proof that the final end, proposed by these successive additions to the number of instances of the same kind of discourses previously related, was to bring the general account of them so much the nearer to completeness. Such at least is the effect upon the sum total or whole, obviously produced by these particular additions. If taken all together, even with these additions, the number of the parables on record is not an account of all that were actually delivered, it certainly approximates the more closely to it.

The detail of events for the last six months of our Lord's ministry would shew that, unless we supposed he was perpetually discoursing in parables, nineteen were as many as we could reasonably expect to find had been delivered within that period of time, particularly during its last three months. The parabolic was not his *ordinary* mode of teaching: it was altogether his *extraordinary*;—as the very time when he began to use it, itself implies. Consequently we ought not to expect to see him resorting to this

mode of teaching indiscriminately at all times, but only on special occasions. If there was any difference too, in the kinds of his parables themselves, (about which more will be said hereafter,) it might be such that, from the nature of the case, one kind would be more frequently employed as an ordinary vehicle of instruction than another; which may incline us to think, that perhaps we possess a more complete account of parables of a certain class, than of those of another.

It is true, we may still object that we do not possess a complete account of our Lord's sermons or discourses in general, nor in fact the most inconceivably small part of them: why, then, should we suppose that we possess an entire account of his parables, which are but one portion of his discourses in particular?

Because, we may reply, his parables are a kind of his discourses, *sui generis*; specifically different from the rest, and standing in the same relation to the body of his discourses in general, as certain of his miraculous acts to the body of his miracles collectively. We have upon record either actually or implicitly, the fact of nineteen or twenty distinct occasions, on which the Gospel historians are content barely to certify the performance of miracles in general and summary terms, without descending into particulars: and these occasions are such as sometimes embrace intervals of many weeks, nay many months, in duration; for instance, in our Lord's different circuits of Galilee—during which a vast number of particular miracles must have been performed, though they are none of them specified, except in general. It is not improbable that for the three

years, during which his personal ministry was still going on, not a day passed without some glorious attestation to his divine power and mission, in one or more of his wonderful works; so that, had every miracle which Jesus wrought, been fully and distinctly recorded, St. John's strong assertion would not be so hyperbolic a statement; that the whole world could scarcely have contained the books, which must have been written.

Yet of the prodigious number of miracles which we may thus reasonably suppose to have been performed, thirty-eight or thirty-nine are the sum total of all that the four evangelists together are found to have left circumstantially on record. Special reasons there must have been, for limiting the number of miracles, which might have been detailed, to the actual account of so few; something there must have been, to discriminate these thirty-eight or thirty-nine instances of the divine power and goodness, in particular, from the vastly more numerous amount of similar evidences, which made up the body of the miraculous testimony to the truth of the Christian mission; or these in particular, we may presume, would not have been set forth by the inspired historians of the ministry of Christ, for the conviction of future ages, while the rest were comparatively thrown into the shade. It strengthens the presumption of the peculiar character of the miracles specially recorded, that few as they are, they are not each of them related by a different evangelist, but most of them by more than one, and some of them by all the four. The evangelists record such miracles even at the risk of tautology.

Now something of this kind may hold good of

the parables in particular, compared with the rest of our Lord's discourses in general. The parables were a special kind of his discourses, as such and such miraculous acts were special kinds of his miracles. It is not more improbable that none of the days of our Lord's three years' ministry passed over without some instructive or interesting discourse, than without some wonderful miracle: but if it was not every day that produced a miracle worthy of special or peculiar record, it might not be every day that produced a discourse, sufficiently novel or different from common, to require a particular account of it,—like a parable. Our Lord's ordinary teaching and preaching is mentioned almost as often as his ordinarily performing miracles, and healing the people; but the particulars of what he taught on those ordinary occasions, are given in detail only in the two sermons on the mount. If there is reason to suppose that the evangelists have not passed over the special miracles of their Master, without specific notice, there seems equal reason to believe that they have been careful to do the same by his special discourses; of which number the parables would be one class, and upon the whole as important and as interesting a class, as any.

CHAPTER II.

On the division and classification of the parables.

THE supposition of a possible division of the parables supposes also a difference of kinds amongst them, according to which, and to which alone, they can properly be distributed or classified. The existence of such a difference is no new discovery, having occurred before, more or less completely, to former expositors: nor is much ingenuity or penetration concerned in perceiving it; the slightest consideration of these parts of the Gospels being sufficient to convince us, that many of the parables agree in some respects with each other, and stand distinguished so far from the rest.

I am not aware, however, that former commentators have carried the true principle of their distribution to its legitimate extent; or ascertained and pointed out the groundwork of a comprehensive general division, which might include them all, and yet distribute them intelligibly asunder; exhibiting at one view both the assortment which may be made of the parables in common, and to which head or department of the arrangement any given parable is to be referred in particular. Yet this, I believe, it was possible to have done; and this is what, in the course of the present chapter, I shall endeavour to effect.

Were we to be satisfied with looking at any one characteristic circumstance of distinction, which would include a certain number of the parables, and

exclude the rest, very many classes or distributions of them might be made. Some were delivered with premeditation, others without; and so far would constitute respectively two classes out of the whole: some were delivered in public, others in private; some to the people at large, others to the disciples in particular; some were inserted as part of a more continuous discourse, others were the substance of a discourse themselves; some were ushered in with an object of comparison premised to the substance of the history which followed, others were not; some have a common subject matter, a material structure and composition of their history more or less the same, others are entirely without parallel in the rest. All these, and such like distinctions, however, it is evident, are purely accidental and unessential, and, therefore, insufficient to furnish the basis of a regular and comprehensive assortment of the parables; or a just division of the particulars or species belonging to their common genus.

Among these distinctions, notwithstanding, there is one, not yet enumerated, which though it may seem to be founded in a circumstance of accident as much as the rest, and apparently not to be more essential than any of them, may nevertheless lead, upon further consideration, to the discovery of the true principle of that just division, of which we are in search. All the parables which our Saviour is said to have delivered, were either applied and explained by himself, at the time when they were delivered, or they were not. Those which he applied and explained, at the time, will form one comprehensive portion of the whole, and those which he left unapplied and unexplained, will form another;

and both together will make up the sum total of the parables, which the Gospel history has placed on record, and which are comprised in our syllabus or list.

The existence of this characteristic distinction among the parables is a matter of fact, the truth or the falsity of which any one may put to the test, by the mere inspection of the parables, as they occur in the Gospel narrative. There is one precaution, however, which I think it but fair and reasonable to suggest beforehand, to any who may be inclined to make this examination; and that is to the following effect.

As every parable, which they will find on record, was delivered by our Lord himself at a particular time and place; was addressed to a particular audience, and designed for a particular purpose; the question whether any thing is to be met with, premised or subjoined to a given parable, and calculated to throw light upon its meaning, is in all reason, to be considered a question, whether any thing occurs, so premised or subjoined, which would be likely to possess such an use, at that particular time and place, and for that particular audience; yet proceeded from the mouth of our Saviour himself. If the reasonableness of this precaution be admitted—whatever was no part of his own discourse at the time; whatever was no part of the parable as such, or of any exposition of it as such, whether it declares the scope and design of the parable, or not, if it was not delivered along with the parable, or addressed to the same persons who heard that; can justly be considered an exception to our general rule. Notices, therefore, of the origin, design, or purport

of a particular parable, which come directly from the historian of it, that is, from the evangelist who relates the parable, writing so long after the time of its first delivery, and for the benefit of the Christian world at large, or of some portion of it in particular;—are not to be confounded with explanations proceeding from the Author of the parable himself: nor yet explanations of parables delivered to one class of persons in public, without note or comment, and afterwards interpreted to another in private: nor yet again declarations of the import of particular parables, premised or subjoined to the delivery of them, which are but apparent explanations, and in order to be fully understood, would require explanation themselves.

Thus much being premised by way of admonition, before the application of the criterion in question, the several parables of which we may assume it as an undeniable fact that they were delivered originally without comment or observation, and were never explained in any shape that we know of, subsequently; or that they were addressed at first without explanation to a certain audience, and explained afterwards only to another; or that, if any clue to their meaning is premised or subjoined to them, it is from the pen of the historian who records them, not from the mouth of the Speaker who first pronounced them; or that, if they were delivered in proof or illustration of any position at the time, it was in proof or illustration of what could not be understood, without more light and explanation than were vouchsafed at the time; are twenty in number: 1. the parable of the sower; 2. the tares; 3. the seed growing secretly; 4. the grain of mustard-

seed; 5. the leaven; 6. the hidden treasure; 7. the pearl; 8. the dragnet; 9. the good shepherd; 10. the servants, left in wait; 11. the servant, left instead of his lord; 12. the barren fig-tree; 13. the great supper; 14. the prodigal son; 15. the labourers in the vineyard; 16. the pounds; 17. the wicked husbandmen; 18. the wedding garment; 19. the virgins; 20. the talents.

Of this number, the first five were delivered to the people in public, without explanation; and if a part of them was afterwards explained, it was only to the disciples in private. The sixth, the seventh, the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and eighteenth, were delivered without any application at the time, or any explanation, that we know of, afterwards; the eighth and the ninth were partially explained at the time when they were delivered, the former to the disciples in private, the latter to the Jews in public; but without conveying in the former case, even to the disciples, any information which they could distinctly comprehend; and so far from enlightening the apprehensions of the Jews in the latter instance, as the evidence of the fact is sufficient to prove, that it only still more perplexed their perception of the meaning of the parable. The fifteenth is preceded and closed by a declaration, which though designed to be applied and illustrated by the parable, was not more capable of being understood at the time by the help of the parable, than without it. The seventeenth also was followed by a declaration, at some distance from the parable, which certainly referred to that as its basis, but would not clear up nor explain the parable itself; which, if it was unintelligible to its hear-

ers without that declaration, was equally unintelligible with it. The sixteenth has a notice of the occasion of the ensuing parable, and to a certain extent, of its design and reference; but solely from the evangelist, St. Luke, who records it. It does not appear that our Saviour said any thing at the time, that was likely to explain the parable intelligibly to his hearers. The twentieth, as it stands, stands without note or comment of any kind; and though the nineteenth has an apparent application both premised and subjoined to it, it is such an application as I shall shew in its proper place to have been purely figurative or metaphorical; and therefore, without some further explanation, such as is not given, it was not more intelligible itself, than the parable which suggested or illustrated it.

After excepting these twenty parables from the entire number, as that part of them which were not explained, applied, or illustrated in any way, at the time when they were delivered, there still remain seven more, of which it is as evident that they were explained, applied, and elucidated for the benefit of the hearers, at the time when they were spoken, as that the others were not. These seven parables are respectively those of the king, who took account of his debtors; of the good Samaritan; of the rich man's ground; of the unjust steward; of the rich man and Lazarus; of the importunate widow; and of the Pharisee and the publican. Among this number, there is none of which the fact of its being in some manner or other explained at the time, can be considered doubtful, except that of the rich man and Lazarus; which appears indeed to stand independent of all connexion, and is certainly followed by

nothing calculated either to illustrate or apply it. But it is preceded by something, to which it bears a proper reference, and of which it furthers the moral and application. It is not, therefore, destitute of connexion with what goes before it; but makes a part of the series of a moral and didactic discourse, the drift and intention of which it is very easy to discover.

If the existence of such a difference in the historical circumstances, attending the delivery of the several parables, as this; that some were applied or explained at the time, and others were not—is an undeniable matter of fact, it may justly be considered to imply that there must have been some essential distinction in the kinds of the parables respectively. Are we to suppose that such a difference in the historical circumstances of their delivery was, in each instance, a mere matter of accident, or the effect of premeditation and design? Was it arbitrary, precarious, and resolvable into no certain rule, or necessary, uniform, and founded in the reason of things? That it is an uniform and regular consequence in every instance of the occurrence of a parable, no one can doubt: there is no parable to be produced, to which it does not apply; which is not characterized by the circumstance of its being applied and explained at the time, or by the contrary. The question then is, was this the case, in either instance, for any good and sufficient reason, or not? Was it indifferent to our Saviour, whether his parables were to be understood, or not, that he should do something to facilitate their being understood, at one time, which he did not do at another? Was there any such difference in the parables them-

selves, that those which he left unexplained, might be comprehended without explanation, but those which he explained, could not? Was it intentionally that he applied or elucidated some of the number, and unintentionally that he passed over others; or equally on purpose, that he did both? Had his rule of proceeding in the delivery of his parables always been the same; had he regularly explained and applied them all, or regularly explained and applied none of them; either we should have had no ground *a priori* to infer the existence of a difference in the parables themselves, or it must have been some ground of a very different nature, from that which is supplied by this fact. But if the Author and Speaker of the parables is invariably seen to explain and apply a certain number of them on the spot; this fact is a sure intimation that he always intended so many of them to be explained and applied at once: if he is invariably seen not to explain or apply the rest, but to leave them exactly as they were delivered, without any comment or observation upon them, which might give the least insight into their meaning; this fact too ought to be a clear proof that he never intended to explain or apply this portion of his parables in particular.

Now a discourse of this nature, that is, like one of our Saviour's parables, which is not illustrated, cleared up, or applied, at the time when it is delivered, may very possibly not be understood; just as on the other hand, it is almost impossible that one, which happens to be explained or applied by its author, as soon as pronounced, can fail of being understood. Yet even such a discourse, though standing independent of all other matter before or after

it, which may reflect some light on its meaning, must nevertheless, we may justly presume, possess a meaning and purpose of its own, quite as much as another, which happens to be explained or applied. The only difference between them is, that the scope and purpose of the discourse, or what is the same thing, the intention of the speaker in delivering the parable, do not appear in the former case, neither from the parable itself, nor from any thing independent of it, premised or subjoined to it; but they do appear in the latter, if not from the self-evident light of the discourse itself, yet from the luminous commentary and application of the speaker. In one of these cases, a naked history, without note, observation, or comment, is set before the hearer; in the other, a history furnished with its moral, and clothed with a commentary and application. The hearer, therefore, may possibly be at a loss what to make of the former; but it can scarcely happen that he should feel himself perplexed by the latter. For the understanding of the former, he is absolutely left to his personal sagacity, penetration, conjectures; for the comprehension of the latter, he has nothing to do but to follow his guide, and to attend to the explanation which is laid before him. The clue is put into his hands, the road is chalked out for his steps, on the one hand; but he must unravel the thread, and pick out his path, for himself, on the other: he cannot go astray nor miss of the truth, in the former instance, but he is perpetually liable to be misled or to fall into error, in the latter.

Now a history of any kind, and especially a parabolic history, which, though delivered without the

addition of explanatory matter, must still be supposed to have some meaning and design of its own, and must be, in some manner or other, received and understood by the hearers, appears to be capable of only two modes of construction in general; either it must be received and understood, *literally*, or it must not. If such a history is to be received and understood literally, it is of course to be received and construed as neither more nor less than what it is in itself, or seems to be; but if it is not to be literally received and construed, then, whatever else it may be considered to denote, it cannot be what it is in itself, or what it seems to be.

To apply this distinction to the unexplained parables of our Saviour. If these discourses of his, destitute as we suppose them of all light from without to give them a direction, or application, could for a moment be considered as literally to be understood, as neither more nor less than what they are in themselves, or what they appear to be, it would be impossible not to conclude that all such discourses were practically useless, were nugatory and absurd. No parable is capable of standing alone, and fulfilling any didactic or doctrinal purpose: the idea of a parable so intended, and yet destitute of a moral, declaring its scope and meaning, is a contradiction in terms, and destructive of the essence of the thing itself. It would be a means, intended for a certain end, yet without an application; it would be an example or illustration, with nothing exemplified or illustrated by it. The utmost that could be said of such histories is, that they might possibly amuse the imagination of the hearers, by such and such a representation, but without informing their

understandings or influencing their practice in the least; just as the eye may be pleased by pictures, the figures and scenery of which it is nevertheless unacquainted with.

If the material representation, however, of a parabolic history under such circumstances is not to be simply received, and construed as what it is in itself, or what it seems to be, but as something different from what it is in itself, or seems to be; it is to be received and construed *figuratively*; and if it is figuratively to be received and construed, it contains an *allegory*; and if it contains an allegory, it is possible that, when decyphered, the thing, or series of things denoted by this allegory, may be fully capable of standing alone, and possessing a use and meaning, a moral and significancy, derived entirely from itself, and comprehended absolutely within itself. Every allegory is capable of a key, and by virtue of that key, of an interpretation; and allegorical history, rightly ascertained and interpreted, is neither more nor less than simple history; which, under the circumstances of the case, may be such as shall be finite and complete in itself.

I assume it, then, as a very probable truth, that all the parables in the Gospel narrative, which are perceived to stand there, as they were first delivered, without note or comment explanatory of their meaning,—will ultimately turn out to be allegories^a. I

^a Where we meet with a parable, or any thing like it, in works distinct from the Gospels, but the authors of which were acquainted with the Gospels, and consequently with the Gospel parables, as well as the rest of their contents; it is very evident, such parables are allegories, and therefore that the framers of them took a parable and an allegory to be convertible terms.

assume it further, as a probable consequence of this very truth, that all such histories, being in their obvious or external nature and constitution allegorical, when they are decyphered and interpreted by the help of their proper key, will be found to consist of *prophecies*. Allegorical narrative or history, once interpreted, is reduced to naked and simple history: and naked and simple history, standing alone, unapplied and unexplained in any way that would shew it to be meant for doctrine or instruction, we may presume, can be intended for neither more nor less than history; and, therefore, for prophetic history. For, as the intention of clothing simple history in the form of allegorical must necessarily be somehow to disguise and conceal it, we cannot so reasonably suppose such an intention of any description of history, as that of the *future*. Disguise or concealment of the past, or the present, as such, could not be so properly the object of such a method of representation, if on no other account, at least for this; that the end proposed by the means adopted would be more liable, in their instance, to be defeated by the means themselves. It is not so easy to disguise the past, or the present, under any

Of this nature are the Similitudines (Græce παραβολαί) in the Pastor of Hermas, lib. iii: all parabolic allegories. See for example, Similitudo v. cap. 2. p. 61. and its interpretation, cap. 4. 5. p. 62.

None of these similitudes have much to recommend them, on the score of simplicity, ingenuity, appositeness; beyond the illustration they afford of the author's notion of what a similitude or parable, as such, must be. The first idea of them was no doubt taken from those in the Gospels; and there are some in the collection, which have not even the merit of originality, but were evidently borrowed from our Saviour's.

form, which shall effectually prevent their being recognised, and the stratagem defeated, as it is the future; because the past and the present either have been already, or are actually, the subject matter of men's knowledge and experience; but the future is still something altogether indefinite and unknown. We should know, therefore, the real truth of a given allegorical representation, relating to either of the former, antecedently to the representation itself: and the knowledge of that truth, happily applied, would enable us at once to penetrate into the disguise under which it was concealed. But we have no such antecedent knowledge of the real meaning of symbolical history, which relates to the future: and therefore it is almost impossible that we should penetrate at once into the meaning of such a representation, without some assistance and direction from without. So little, indeed, are we capable of comprehending futurity, as such, and so little incapacitated from the ready apprehension or recollection of the present, or the past; that even the former, however simply and historically laid before us, could not perhaps be fully conceived and understood; and the latter, however artificially delineated and disguised, would never be incapable of detection and recognition.

The due proof of these several conclusions cannot be distinctly made out, until we come to the examination of each parable by itself. Yet it is some ground of presumption, (and no slight one,) in favour of their truth, that as the parables, which stand invariably alone and without explanation, are to be supposed on that very account, to be allegorical and prophetic, so those which are all found to be ex-

plained and applied, at the time of their occurrence, are seen from the nature of the commentary which turns upon them, to be simply and purely *doctrinal, ethical, or moral*, in opposition to historical, prophetic, or allegorical. These parables in every instance are found to be the vehicles not of facts, but of doctrines; the former, not of doctrines, but of facts. The practical tendency of the other class is manifest throughout them. They occur in the midst of moral and doctrinal discourses; and they give occasion to such discourses: they illustrate some specific duty, and enforce some specific obligation: they supply the data of certain comprehensive practical conclusions, or they contain the expansion and elucidation of some pregnant, diffusive, moral axiom: they are cases in point—whether real or fictitious in themselves is purely indifferent—and parallel to certain real situations in the moral, religious, and social relations of Christians, to which they are applied: they are in short so many examples, and the use and application made of them in particular are so many specimens of the use and application of the argument from the example in general. Nothing of this kind is true of the parables of the other class.

It is some further argument of the peculiar character of the parables of this latter class, that among the number of such unexplained and unapplied similitudes exclusively are those, which Jesus first delivered, and last; which he delivered in public, and not in private; which he delivered professedly and *ex cathedra*, not upon the occasion, and from the circumstances of the moment; which he addressed to the people, and not to the disciples; which he

intended for scribes and Pharisees, his constant enemies and persecutors, not for apostles or believers, his friends and followers. If there was any thing which, for special reasons, might require to be conveyed and taught in the form of parable, and under the disguise of allegory, we may presume it would more especially apply to solemn and singular occasions of his teaching, like these; and would be addressed to an audience of such a character, rather than to one of a very different description.

It is a still stronger ground of presumption to the same effect, that of the twenty parables in question, some are ascertained and recognised to be allegories, on no less an authority than the testimony of our Lord himself; who, by having vouchsafed an interpretation of them, has set their real character in a light that cannot be mistaken. This is eminently true of the first, the second, and the eighth of the number which were delivered consecutively on the first occasion of teaching in parables; and by proving that these three were prophetic allegories, it leaves no good reason to doubt whether the remaining five were so likewise, or not. The ninth is a parable of the same description in general; as may certainly be collected both from the material representation itself, which is such as necessarily to be figurative, and from the personal application of the parts of the representation to our Lord himself, mixed up and incorporated with it. The twelfth, the nineteenth, and twentieth, are found in the course of a detail of prophetic matter, of which they carry on the progress, and contribute to the moral, respectively, as much as the rest of it. The fifteenth is

both preceded and summed up by a declaration of which the parable is explanatory, and that, manifestly prophetic of a future fact. Others are so obviously both allegorical and prophetic, as the tenth, the eleventh, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth, that it would be the height of absurdity to suppose they were ever intended for any thing but symbolical histories, adumbrating under that disguise some past or some future truths. The sixteenth was suggested, as the evangelist tells us, by the expectation of a future fact, and was expressly designed to correct that expectation, if not with respect to the fact itself, yet certainly with respect to the time of the fact. So that it appears there is in all the twenty, either so clear, or so presumptive an indication of their symbolical nature; either so express or so implicit a reference to the future; that it warrants us in concluding they are all in general allegories, and each in particular prophecies.

It is a further indication of the same truth, that to the ten of the number, recorded either by St. Matthew or by St. Mark, the phrase, "The kingdom of heaven *or* the kingdom of God is likened; " the kingdom of heaven *or* the kingdom of God is " like," (*ὁμοιωθή ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, or ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, or τοῦ Θεοῦ,*) is actually found prefixed, and to two more, the thirteenth and sixteenth, as recorded by St. Luke, it is virtually, if not actually so; the ostensible occasion of the latter, and the subject matter, if not the occasion, of the former, proving them as plainly to relate to the same kingdom of heaven or God, as if the words in question had been premised to them. The fact of this relation appears further from a comparison of the thir-

teenth, related by St. Luke, with the eighteenth, recorded by St. Matthew.

I observe upon this coincidence, that it implies in the subject matter of all these parables, a common reference to what was called, in the exposition of two of them, as given by our Lord himself, the mysteries (*μυστήρια*) of the kingdom in question. The mysteries of this kingdom, agreeably to the Greek idiom, are the mysteries of which that kingdom is the object; the mysteries which relate to, or concern it: nor need I to shew for the benefit of any one, who is acquainted, however superficially, with the meaning of terms in the original language, that *μυστήριον* in Greek does not properly denote what we understand by a mystery in English—viz. some sublime and incomprehensible truth or doctrine; but simply what is intended by *arcanum* in Latin, and by *a secret* in English. The mysteries relating to the kingdom of heaven are, consequently, the secrets relating to that kingdom; which secrets, the exposition of the parables proves to be not doctrines, but *facts*; and facts, which might well be called secret and recondite, at this time, if they were the facts and truths of the future historical development of the plan and progress of the Christian dispensation; and consequently were as yet concealed, and unless specially made known by one, who could take in the future no less than the present or the past, were as yet beyond the limits of human sagacity to discover.

Parables relating to such truths and secrets as these, it is manifest would be both allegorical and prophetic; allegorical in their outward form and constitution, prophetic in their inward meaning

and signification. The only division, then, and classification of the parables of the Gospels, which I propose, hereafter, to recognise, and yet, as I conceive, a just distribution and a competent arrangement of them all, is into the allegorical and prophetic on the one hand, and the historical and moral on the other; the criterion of the former being that they were never explained or applied by our Saviour at the time, that of the latter that they always were: the former being twenty in number, the latter seven; the first of the one being the sower, and the last the talents; the first of the other, the king taking account of his debtors, the last, the Pharisee and the publican; the former, all comprehended in the last eighteen months of our Saviour's ministry, and the latter, in the last six.

It is of the former in particular that I wish a preceding observation to be understood; viz. that if we possess a complete account of the parables that were actually delivered, in those which are actually recorded, it is more probably of the allegorical than of the moral. The number of the former is almost three times that of the latter; at least if twenty of the twenty-seven belong to the one class, and only the remainder to the other. The former too began to be used much earlier; and continued to be used when we have no proof on record that any use was still made of the latter.

But, in the nature of things, a history designed for an allegory; that is for something more than it seemed to be—could not fail to be more curious and interesting, and to excite a more lively attention, than one designed for a moral example; that is simply

for what it appeared to be: and a history, in like manner, which under the covering of allegory, was the vehicle of latent prophecy, could not fail to be rendered by that means not only more curious and interesting, but withal more dignified and important, than one which was to be received in its obvious sense, and merely prepared the way for some precept and rule of duty, or was given in illustration of one. It is probable, therefore, that the former would be more apt to be remembered, preserved, and perpetuated than the latter, wherever and whensoever they happened to be heard: for, independent of prophecy conveyed in parables, the other prophetic discourses of our Saviour, which he delivered occasionally in the discharge of his ministry, appear to have been much more uniformly recorded in detail, than the particulars of his ordinary instructions to the people. These discourses were no doubt of much rarer occurrence also; which would be an additional reason, why they should be all recorded. It is not on every day that we can probably suppose Jesus to have been speaking in the language of prophecy: but there is scarcely a day in the duration of his ministry, on which we can probably suppose him to have been silent in the way of instruction; to have preached no sermon, nor delivered any moral and practical discourse. His prophecies as such, or those parts of his discourses which contain the largest mixture of prophetic matter, with the least of moral admonition—or in which the revelation of the future, and not instruction in the rule of duty—or practical admonitions dependent on the knowledge of the future—is the main object of the speaker, occur certainly latest in the

order of time of any: of which we need appeal to no other instances than Luke xi. 37-54. compared with Matt. xxiii^b: Luke xii^c: Luke xiii. 1-9^d: 23-35^e: Luke xvii. 20-36^f: Luke xviii. 1-8^g: and lastly, the whole of the prophecy delivered upon mount Olivet^h.

^b Harm. P. iv. 31. 77.^c Ibid. 32.^d Ibid. 33.^e Ibid. 36, 37.^f Ibid. 47.^g Ibid. 48.^h Ibid. 78, 79.

CHAPTER III.

On the final end proposed by the use of Parables.

IF the kinds of parables, as we have endeavoured to render it probable, were twofold; and if these kinds were respectively so opposed to each other, as we have assumed; the ends designed by the use of either must be similarly distinguished and opposed likewise. To suppose, then, that any common end was designed by the use of the parables generally, would be as absurd, or, at least, as inconsistent with the principles which we have attempted to establish, as to suppose there was no difference in the kinds of the parables themselves.

The state of the case appears, in fact, to be such as we should expect from our conclusions. Each kind of parables had a proper use and purpose, but they were the reverse of each other: the moral were designed to instruct, the allegorical, to withhold information; the moral were intended to make something clearer, the allegorical, to make something more obscure; the one were calculated to simplify certain truths, and to assist the comprehensions of the hearers, the other, to veil their proper subject matter in a degree of mystery, which would only perplex and confound it.

The nature and particulars of the two species of parables were, indeed, respectively very different; and therefore their office and designation were different likewise. The moral parables belong to the class of examples, which must always be applied to enforce or inculcate some point of practice; but the

allegorical are simply and purely histories, only not simply and plainly expressed. Doctrines or duties, with the principles in which they were founded, and the obligations which they entailed in practice, are the business of the former; a narrative of facts, whether past, or present, or future, is the thing represented by the latter. We can imagine no good reason for seeking to disguise the apprehension of moral truths, which are at all times equally applicable in practice, and at all times equally concerning in obligation; nor therefore, for leaving unexplained the scope and intention of parables, possessing the force of examples, and cases in point to the practical truths or doctrines, which were the subjects of discussion. But we may conceive a variety of sufficient reasons, why it might be necessary to conceal the immediate knowledge and comprehension of such and such a series of facts; why, therefore, an historical narrative of such facts should be delivered under the form of an allegory, and the allegory, so delivered, not afterwards be cleared up and explained. These facts might be such as were not yet *true*, that is, had not yet a *real* existence; and therefore were strictly future, not present or past: as future, they might be such as were not yet personally interesting to those who heard them stated, though they might afterwards become so. There could be no prejudice against the reception of a rule or principle of duty, nor any difficulty with respect to its comprehension, at one time more than another; but there might be a present repugnance to the knowledge of certain facts, and a present difficulty as to their being apprehended, which would render it not only offensive and dangerous,

but perhaps impracticable and absurd, to reveal them clearly and simply at the time. The course of events could give no additional force to the obligation of a moral duty, nor facilitate the better perception of a moral axiom; but it would do every thing in clearing up and assisting the apprehension of predictions. Parables, in short, which inculcated moral examples, were very proper means of public teaching; and those, which exhibited an allegorical narrative of facts, might be not less adapted as the medium of a certain kind of prophecy.

That some of our Lord's parables were intended for concealment, is so unquestionably true, and so open to observation, that commentators have repeatedly assumed the fact of such a purpose, as the final end of the parabolic method of teaching in general; and to evince the wisdom and utility of adopting a method of teaching, in so great a variety of instances, the reverse of the ordinary plainness and simplicity of teaching in general, and of the instructions of a moral teacher in particular, they have thought it sufficient to assign such reasons as these; the novelty or pleasurable-ness of the mode of teaching itself—its remarkable accordancy to the habits and genius of Oriental nations—and more especially, as we may presume, a particular desire of our Saviour's to try the understandings of his hearers, and which of them would exhibit the greatest share of sagacity, discernment, or penetration, in decyphering the meaning of his parables—or to ascertain their temper and disposition, their moral qualifications in general, and their attachment to himself in particular; which of them would acquiesce in the employed mode of teaching,

notwithstanding its apparent difficulty and obscurity, out of deference to his own authority, and which of them would be scandalized by it—which of them, in a particular instance, would apply for more light and information, and which would take no further trouble to obtain it. All these, and such like reasons, though commonly proposed as an account of the origin of the method of teaching in parables, or of the end contemplated by the concealment of their meaning in certain instances, are liable to the objection of being at variance with the plain matter of fact, and with the inference deducible from it, that there was a certain number of his parables, which Jesus regularly explained at the time of their delivery, and a certain number more, which he quite as regularly did not.

We may infer, as before, from this fact with respect to parables of the former kind, that our Lord could never have intended them not to be understood, if he always explained and applied them himself; and we may argue from it with respect to those of the latter, that he could never have intended these to be understood, at the time at least, which he never explained or applied. If he acted consistently in each of these instances, and just as intentionally in the one as in the other, it must be manifest that he was as desirous to conceal his meaning in the one case, as to make it clear and intelligible in the other; it is as presumptively probable that concealment was the sole end of the one, as that instruction was the only object of the other. And concealment, under such circumstances, could not be merely partial or temporary, with regard at least to the original use of the parable,

and to the wants of the parties particularly addressed by it. So far as these were concerned, the concealment was total and permanent. It is not reasonable to suppose that Jesus would afterwards concede the knowledge of such and such truths, to the same persons, from whom he had originally withheld it; and there is no proof that he ever did. If he explained a parable at one time which he had delivered without explanation at another, it was not to the persons who had first heard it, and to whom it was properly addressed. We cannot but conclude, therefore, that it is equally incorrect to say, all our Lord's parables were designed for concealment, as that all were designed to be understood; to deny that there were many which he always intended to be understood, as that there were still more, which he always designed to be incapable of being understood: and we are bound to infer from these two facts, that as he cannot be supposed to have wished to leave the former without explanation, even for a moment, so neither is it likely that he meant to explain the latter, at least to the persons to whom they were first addressed, however so long afterwards.

I may leave it to the judgment of any sensible person, to decide whether, as often as he meets in the Gospel narrative with one of those parables, which we have called moral examples, he is at a loss to discover its drift and application. These parables in particular reflect a light and clearness on the proper subject of discourse, the reverse of darkness or obscurity. However simple and intelligible the point in discussion may be, they make it still plainer and simpler than before. Be-

yond their obvious scope and meaning, they possess no utility, and contribute to no purpose, whatever; and if these are not to be discovered, they are rendered nugatory and superfluous; they fail of the end of their being. Strange indeed it is to maintain, that in his moral discourses our Lord was purposely studious to be unintelligible; and that while he was professing to be teaching his hearers some of the most important points of Christian duty, he was teaching them in such a manner that they could not possibly understand him. On the contrary, it is a remarkable proof of his condescension to the infirmities of human nature, of his earnest desire to produce conviction—to make his discourses as edifying and persuasive as possible, and the knowledge of duty as clear and perspicuous, as the simplest understandings could desire—that not satisfied to rest the obligation of his decisions on the weight of his own authority, he subjoins easy and familiar illustrations of the principles on which they are founded—not content to sum up the rules of duty in the most compendious form, and the clearest and most impressive language, he enters into apposite and beautiful explanations of his moral axioms, and assists the natural grossness of the conceptions of his audience by historical pictures of his meaning, which represent the moral truths in question in as lively and distinct a manner to the understanding, as figure and colour, light and shade, in the hands of the painter, portray the proper subjects of his pencil to the senses.

But with regard to the allegorical parables the case is widely different. With respect to these—both from the nature of such parables themselves;

from the circumstances of their place in the context; from the nature of their peculiar subject matter; and from the assurance of our Lord himself, we have just grounds to conclude that they could answer no purpose, and could be designed for none but mystery and concealment.

For first, if every such parable is an allegory, it partakes of the nature of the enigma^a; and the final end of the enigma, as no one will doubt, is to *puzzle*. Aristotle's definition of the enigma^b, that it affirms what really holds good, by terms and associations of ideas which involve an impossibility, would almost equally well apply to an allegorical history, which seems to be one thing, and really is another; in which the obvious, *prima facie* meaning of the narrative is nugatory or false, the concealed and secondary sense alone is consistent and true. Enigmas indeed admit of being solved, and so do allegorical narratives of being interpreted; but this does not prove that neither of them was intended at first sight to obscure the discovery of its meaning in general, only that they are not so wrapt up in mystery, but that their meaning may possibly be found out. An allegorical history, then, may be admirably suited for temporary concealment; though to suppose it intended for perpetual, would be almost to suppose it was destitute of meaning altogether. If it has a meaning, that meaning may sometime transpire, however long it may continue

^a Καίτοι παντί που δήλον ἂν εἴη δήπουθεν, ὡς παραβολὴ καὶ αἶνιγμα πραγμάτων ἂν εἶεν ἐμφάσεις ἐτέρων μᾶλλον, ἢ ὅπερ ἂν εἶναι δοκοῖεν αὐτά. Cyrillus contra Julian. ix. 299. D.

^b Αἰνίγματος γὰρ ἰδέα αὕτη ἐστὶ, τὸ, λέγοντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἀδύνατα συνάψαι. Aristot. Poetica, 37.

concealed ; the discovery at least of such a meaning, which has always a real existence, is at any time a possible case.

It is no objection to the assumption on which this argument proceeds, that the allegorical parables, for ought which appears on the face of them, are natural and probable narratives of some kind or other. This may be very true, and yet they may still be allegories. If they were actually allegorical, and designed for concealment, it was not to be expected that they would betray their own secret, or give an intimation of their intrinsic nature, by their outward form and character. The very simplicity of their external texture renders them fitter for the purpose of disguise, because so much the safer from detection. Where the contrast is greatest between the secret import and the outward sense of the same discourse, we may rest assured there will be the least predisposition in the hearers to suspect the meaning which lurks under the letter of the text ; there will be little reason to imagine, with any appearance of probability, that profound and mysterious truths are peradventure concealed under so plain and simple an exterior.

Again, the peculiar position of each of these parables in the context of which it forms a part, leads to the same conclusion respecting their use and purpose. Standing, as they are found to stand, isolated and bare ; independent of all that precedes, and of all that follows ; without moral or application of any kind ; integral, separate, and detached portions of the Gospel narrative ; they must be final and complete in themselves, and independent upon every

thing else: leaning on no support, and deriving no light or explanation from without, they must require no support, and derive no light, except from within. If that be the case, they are doubtless allegories: a mere moral history would be incapable of standing in so remarkable a manner alone, and yet serving a proper use and purpose: and if they are allegories, yet are not provided with any clue to their meaning, with any key or direction to get at, and unlock their secret import—they must be intended for concealment.

Thirdly, with respect to the subject matter of these parables—we have supposed that it consists of a series of prophecies; and it will be seen, hereafter, that it actually does so. Every one is aware that the record, if I may so say, of the future, which is prophecy, is not like the record of the past, which constitutes history; but that, from the very nature of a reference to the future, and the difficulty which a finite understanding necessarily labours under, in comprehending the course and circumstances of futurity until they are sensibly explained by the event, prophetic history delivered in the simplest language, without disguise or obscurity of any kind, would be hard to be understood; would still embody more or less of mystery and indistinctness^c. How much more prophecy, purposely shrouded in allegory! a form of attire, under which the shadowy, unsubstantial lineaments of the thing conveyed, are still more obscured and confused

^c Πᾶσα γὰρ προφητεία πρὸ τῆς ἐκβάσεως αἶνυμὰ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀντιλογία τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ καιρὸς, καὶ ἀποβῆ τὸ προφητευθὲν, τότε τῆς ἀκριβεστάτης ἐπέτυχεν ἐξηγήσεως. Irenæus. Adv. Hær. iv. 43. 342. 32. 343. 2.

by the grossness of the texture through which they are exhibited.

Allegory is at all times a difficult thing to be decyphered, even when typical of the past or the present; especially where every precaution is taken to secure it from detection: but allegory, which is symbolical of the future, we may take it for granted will be infinitely more inscrutable, and without the light of passing events, or some key to its meaning furnished from without, to a finite intelligence like that of man will be next to impossible to discover. It seems an unavoidable conclusion, therefore, that histories of this description, which are the vehicles of latent prophecy, and put forth without any hint, or vestige of a hint, to the discovery of their meaning, must have been intended for that very effect which they could not fail to produce: the effect of not being understood, of producing difficulty, perplexity, and confusion in the apprehension of what was denoted by them.

Besides which, could the nature of those prophecies themselves be more particularly examined at present, it would be found that they relate to topics of such a kind, and make disclosures of the course of futurity so peculiar, that the concealment of their meaning, at least for the time, was not more pruden- tial than necessary. Neither would it have been expedient to state them plainly, if it had been practicable; nor would it have been practicable, if it had been expedient.

But, fourthly, the strongest attestation to the design and tendency of the allegorical parables in particular ought to be considered as supplied by our Lord himself: who has asserted in plain terms that,

when using parables of this description, he neither expected nor intended to be understood. In the account of the explanation of the parable of the sower, after the first day's teaching in parables was over, and Jesus with the twelve was returned into his private house, St. Mark tells us that he expressed himself as follows to them^d: "To you it is given " to know the secret of the kingdom of God: but " unto them, those that are without, they all are " made (*known*) in parables; that seeing they may " see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, " and not comprehend^e."

Could we wish for language more intelligible to inform us of the final end proposed by any action, than the terms of this declaration, which notifies the final end proposed by the recent transaction of teaching in parables? Of what use or meaning is this allusion to the exercise of the common faculties of seeing or hearing, in their ordinary way, and upon their ordinary subject matter, yet without their ordinary effect, the perceiving of what has been

^d iv. 11. 12. Cf. Luke viii. 10. also my Harm. P. iii. 17, 18.

^e Quis enim integræ mentis, credere potest, aliquid eos ignorasse, quos magistros Dominus dedit? individuos habitos in comitatu, in discipulatu, in convictu, quibus obscura quæque seorsum disserebat, illis dicens datum esse cognoscere arcana, quæ populo intelligere non liceret? Tertullian. ii. 25. De Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum 22.

Ἔϊτα, ἀρα μόνος ὁ τῆς παλαιᾶς (διαθήκης) Θεὸς ἐτύφλωσε τὰ νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων; Ἰησοῦς δὲ αὐτὸς οὐκ εἴρηκε, Διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλῶ, ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσι; μὴ μισῶν αὐτοὺς, ἐβούλετο μὴ βλέπειν; ἢ διὰ τὸ ἀνάξιον, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν; ὅπου γὰρ αὐτοπροαίρετος πονηρία, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἀποχὴ τῆς χάριτος. τῷ γὰρ ἔχοντι δοθήσεται· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ μὴ ἔχοντος, καὶ ὁ δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἀρθήσεται. Archelai et Manetis Disputatio, cap. ii. Rel. Sacrae iv. 280.

seen, or the comprehension of what has been heard ; if nothing had been proposed to the eye, which might indeed be seen, but could not be perceived, nor presented to the ear, which must be heard, but would not be understood ? And what truth would there be in the declaration assigning the reasons of this anomaly, if nothing had been done expressly with a view to such an effect ? if nothing had purposely been submitted to be seen, which could not be perceived, nor to be heard, which could not be understood ?

As then it is a well known peculiarity of Grecian and Oriental philosophy, that the sages of the east and west had their esoteric, as well as their exoteric truths and doctrines, the latter of which they freely communicated to the world at large, but the former they confined to their intimate disciples and followers ^f ; so does it appear that our Lord had

^f No sect of Philosophy among the Greeks, perhaps, made so formal a distinction of their exoteric and esoteric doctrines, as the Peripatetic, which began with Aristotle ; though a similar distinction between what was to be promiscuously taught, and what was not, was certainly recognized by all the other sects.

Hence, Lucian, in his *Vitarum Auctio*, says to the purchaser of the Peripatetician, what he could not so well have said of any of the rest, *μέμνησο, τὸν μὲν ἐσωτερικόν, τὸν δὲ, ἐξωτερικόν, καλεῖν* : *Opera*. i. 566. cap. 26.

Aulus Gellius has preserved, from the works of the philosopher Andronicus, the originals of two letters which passed between Aristotle's pupil, Alexander, and his master, on this subject ; the former complaining that he had just heard of his having published his esoteric or acroamatic doctrine to the world, so that there was nothing now to distinguish him on the score of knowledge, (a distinction which he prized more than that of power or rank,) from the common herd : the latter answering

one species of parables designed for general use, and another designed for a more circumscribed and par-

that they were published and not published; for though they might be read by all, they could be understood only by his own disciples: Aul. Gell. xx. 5: cf. Plut. Alex. vii: Zonar. Ann. iv. 8: 184. D—185. A.

The exoterica of the Peripatetics, Aulus Gellius tells us, were such subjects as their Rhetorica, Sophistica, Politica, and perhaps, their Ethica; the esoterica or acroatica, their Physica and Dialectica. On the former, Aristotle discoursed in his morning walk about the Lyceum, to any, who chose to attend him; on the latter, in his evening one, and only to a select few, whose genius and capacities he had previously ascertained.

The Pythagoreans made a similar distinction of hearers, into the *ἀκροαματικοὶ*, and the *μαθηματικοὶ*, imparting to the former their popular and exoteric doctrines; to the latter only, their more recondite and esoteric: and so tenacious were they of secrecy, with respect to these last, that Hipparchus, one of their philosophers, having too plainly revealed and commented on this class of their doctrines in his writings, was expelled their school; and after their manner, in such cases, a pillar or cenotaph erected to him, as dead.

The Platonic, the Stoic, and even the Epicurean sects had all certain sacred and mysterious truths, which they did not care to communicate, except to such as had previously been proved to be worthy of confidence. On the same principle, observes Clement of Alexandria, the truths taught in the mysteries, were purposely wrapt up in fables, whose real meaning was known only to the initiated. In Egypt, Persia, India, and Æthiopia, and wherever else there were peculiar schools of philosophy to be met with, their characteristic dogmas in physics, theology, or the like, were made known only with due caution and reserve, and to but few. The world at large, whatever they might appear to know of such doctrines, from what they were openly taught, knew nothing of them in reality: Clem. Alex. ii. 679. Strom. v. 9.

Christianity too had its *ἀπόρρητα* and *ἑσωτερικά*, as well as the schools of philosophy, so long as the anagogical method of interpreting scripture was the fashionable one in the church. And

ticular purpose. The former were his moral parabolic examples, the latter his allegorical prophetic histories: the former his exoteric, the latter his esoteric, instances of the same kind of teaching in general.

I do not mean to say that there was any thing in common between the respective subject matter of these different kinds of parables; as there was probably much, between the exoteric and esoteric doctrines of ancient philosophy; for there can be nothing in common between doctrines as such, to which one sort of them was subservient, and facts as such, which were represented by the other. Nor do I mean to say that each was not, or might not have been, always used in public, without prejudice to its proper character and design even when most intended to be the vehicle of concealed or esoteric matter: but only that the meaning of the things conveyed by the one, to whomsoever and whensoever they were delivered, was withheld from the first, while that of the things taught by the other was never withheld at all. Our Lord applied and explained his moral parables publicly, and in

therefore it is, that Origen, rebuking the boast of Celsus, who had asked some questions of the advocates of the Gospel, not because, said he, I want information; for I know all they can tell me: replies, he might just as well boast he was master of all the learning of Egypt, because he knew as much as met the eye of the common people, under the disguise of symbols, hieroglyphics, or the like: or that he was deeply read in the lore of Persian, Syrian, Indian, mysteries, or those of any other nation, who however much they might superficially reveal to the eyes of all observers, had a great deal more which they purposely kept secret from all but themselves: i. 330 *Contra Cels.* i. 12. Cf. *Julian. Oratio vii*: and *Cyrill. contra Julian.* ix. 299 D—300 E.

the audience of any that might be present : his allegorical, he never explained but in private, and then only to his disciples. Nor is there any proof that he explained all of them even to the disciples. St. Mark's declaration^g, in which he sums up the particulars of the first day's teaching in parables, that Jesus interpreted to his disciples in private all that he had been saying to the multitude in public, must be restricted to the exposition of the parables which were then delivered : and this exposition, as far as we have the particulars of it on record, was granted more in compliance with their request than of his own accord, as what he would otherwise have done, or might always be expected to do, under the like circumstances, without solicitation : and such as it was, it communicated no more of the interpretation of the allegories in question, than was sufficient to give a general idea of their scope and meaning : as much perhaps as could then with propriety have been made known, or readily comprehended, but not enough for the gratification of curiosity, or a perfect understanding of particulars.

It is scarcely necessary to add in conclusion, that even with this distinction established in the kinds of the parables, and in the proper use designed by each of them respectively, there is no ground to question the wisdom, propriety, or consistency of our Saviour's conduct, for teaching and delivering what he did, under the disguise of allegory, in a manner and form purposely contrived not to be understood. It is no ground of objecting to his prudence or judgment, that he adopted

^g iv. 33, 34.

this method indirectly to make known particulars, which could not have been, with propriety, more openly communicated. If there was reason to disclose them, or make them known at all, he took thereby the fittest and most eligible method of effecting a wise, an adequate, and a sufficient purpose. The name which he himself has bestowed on the subject matter of these disclosures, the mysteries of the kingdom of God, contains an intimation of their recondite nature, by an obvious allusion to the ἀπόρρητα, or secret truths, taught and inculcated in the various mysteries of paganism; none of which could be promiscuously communicated, without caution and preparation, nor promiscuously received, except under the bond of secrecy from all but the initiated themselves. Moral instruction is a different thing from prophetic revelation; and it is no proof of inconsistency even in an inspired teacher of morality, or of his inattention to the duties of his office, and to the wants and necessities of those whom he has to instruct, if while he is careful of plainness, simplicity, and perspicuity in communicating the particulars of duty, he studies a temporary obscurity and concealment in imparting the knowledge of futurity. Communications of this latter nature we should not have a right to expect, even from an inspired teacher; and were he to vouchsafe them, it would be for special reasons known to himself, and therefore in such a way as he also should think best. Neither, if such disclosures of the future were plainly to be revealed to us, so far as the assurance of our moral obligations is concerned, should we be the better; nor, if they were to be withheld, or so communicated as not im-

mediately to be understood, so far as regards the same great end, should we be the worse. In a word, it can never be proved that the mere foresight of *facts*, the simply historical knowledge of the future, beforehand, like that which we already possess of the present or the past, is of the least importance in a practical point of view, as bringing to light new rules and principles of conduct, or reenforcing the obligation of old; as involving any such consequences to the individual responsibility of moral agents, that without that knowledge they cannot approve themselves to their Maker, and with it they will be better able to do so. Such prescience might gratify our curiosity, and enlarge the bounds of our intellectual comprehension, by extending our view beyond its present natural terminator, the point where history ends and futurity begins; but it would not necessarily conduce to our moral improvement; nor should we be better as well as wiser, for the knowledge of things to come.

CHAPTER IV.

On the first cause of the use of parables, or the reasons which produced them.

AS many divisions might have been made of the parables in general, if taken from merely accidental circumstances of distinction; so might various accounts of the origin of particular parables be assigned, if derived from the special reasons of the case. It has been frequently remarked, and it is open to any one's observation, that the first idea of some of them was suggested apparently, by circumstances of time or place. Such circumstances, in one sense, might be said to have been the cause of the parable delivered; that is, to have immediately produced it.

The operations which we may suppose to have been going on, round about our Lord and his congregation, either in the country, or on the lake, at the time when he began to teach in parables, might give occasion to the material allusions, which are the basis of the external history, in three at least of the eight that were then delivered, the parables of the sower, of the tares, of the springing seed; if not also of a fourth, that of the drawnet or *sagene*, cast into the sea. Jesus was enforcing a certain point of Christian morality, before he subjoined the parable of the king, taking account of his debtors; and that doctrine may be considered to have produced it. The same observation applies to the parable of the rich man's ground: to that of the

servants left in waiting : to that of the servant left instead of his lord : to the parable of the fig-tree planted in a vineyard ; of the rich man and Lazarus ; of the importunate widow ; of the virgins ; and of the talents, respectively. Perhaps the proximity and contemplation of sheepfolds, or flocks of sheep, suggested the allegory of the good shepherd. The parable of the good Samaritan was delivered expressly in answer to a particular question, which had just been put. Our Lord was sitting at meat when he conceived and pronounced the parable of the great supper ; and the parable itself bore an immediate reference to an observation about eating of bread, which had preceded from one of the company. The vineyards, to judge from the time of the year, must have been full of husbandmen or labourers, actively engaged in their cultivation, when he delivered the parable of the labourers, supposed to be hired for the service of a vineyard. A circumstance in the public expectation of a future event, intimately connected with himself, and his approach to Jerusalem, at the time, produced the parable of the pounds. The offence which had been conceived by the Pharisees, at our Lord's condescension in receiving and eating with publicans and sinners, was the immediate occasion of the parable of the prodigal son, the most finished and beautiful of all. The proximity of the events, to represent or personify which is the business of the subject matter of the parables of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, and of the wedding garment, respectively, was probably the occasion of the parables themselves.

All such characteristics of the first causes of the different parables as these, may be instances much

to the point in illustration of a well known feature of our Lord's manner of teaching in general, the accommodation of his topics to the occasion—the applicability of his lessons to the circumstances of time and place: but they are no explanation of his reasons for teaching in parables, as parables. They might account for the origin of particular parables; but they would not account for the origin of parables in general.

As, indeed, the kinds of parables were twofold, and as the allegorical in particular began much earlier, and continued longer, and were more frequently resorted to than the moral, and as the number of the former is three times that of the latter; the question, what was the first or immediate cause of the use of parables in general, seems to concern the origin of the allegorical, much more than that of the moral, in particular. One reason, we may observe, which applies to the former exclusively, is assigned by St. Matthew; viz. the requisite fulfilment of prophecy: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world^a.” I am not one of those who profess to know better than an inspired evangelist, writing under the direction of the Holy Ghost, whether this text of the Psalms, itself the dictation of the Holy Ghost, was or was not always intended by the Spirit which suggested, if not by the holy penman who recorded it, to apply to that characteristic circumstance of our Lord's teaching, lately exemplified—the nature

^a Matt. xiii. 35.

of which it seems so well adapted to describe beforehand. On the contrary, if St. Matthew has said that it was fulfilled by what then took place, I must believe that it was always intended to be fulfilled by what then took place, though it might apply and be intended to apply, to other things also. There may, however, be persons, who will think St. Matthew's citation of the text is merely an accommodation of something, recorded in the scriptures of the Old Testament, to a fact in our Saviour's public demeanour, to which it might be so accommodated, without supposing that it was always intended to be fulfilled by it. To insist, then, upon the argument from the fulfilment of prophecy, as one of the causes which produced the use of parables of the allegorical kind in particular, would not be satisfactory to such persons; though in my own opinion, we should be justified, upon the authority of St. Matthew, in insisting on it; and had our Saviour never taught in parables, more especially in such as were designed for concealment, he would not have done one of those things after his appearance, which prophecy had anticipated of the Messiah before he appeared.

As St. Mark and St. Luke assigned the *final* end of the teaching in allegorical parables, when they gave an account of our Lord's answer to the request of the disciples that he would explain to them the parable of the sower; so does St. Matthew allege the *first* cause which produced that mode of teaching, in his account of the answer to another question of theirs, "Wherefore art thou speaking "unto them in parables^b?" The answer to such an

^b Matt. xiii. 10. Harm. P. iii. 17.

inquiry could hardly fail to assign the reason in question: and the words of the evangelist are as clear and express in specifying this reason, as those of the other two were, in recording what was said about the final end. “For this reason am I
“ speaking to them in parables, because that seeing
“ they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither
“ comprehend; and in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith; With hearing ye
“ shall hear, and not comprehend, and seeing ye
“ shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this
“ people hath waxen gross, and with their ears
“ they have heard dully, and their eyes they have
“ *altogether* closed, lest haply they should see with
“ *their* eyes, and should hear with *their* ears, and
“ should comprehend with *their* heart, and should
“ turn (*to me*), and I should heal them ^c.”

There is here the same reference, as before, to the exercise of the natural faculties upon their natural objects, yet without their natural effect; to something which the subjects or possessors of these faculties had seen, but not perceived, had heard, but not understood: and it is asserted now, that this fact was the reason of what had been done, by Jesus's teaching in parables which could not be understood; as it is afterwards, that the same was the motive for which it had been done. In other words, this declaration of St. Matthew's does as explicitly assign the true first cause, by reason of which Jesus taught in parables not to be understood, as that in St. Mark or St. Luke, the true final end, for the sake of which he did it.

^c Matt. xiii. 13—15.

Now that what the people are supposed to have seen or heard, without the natural effect of perceiving or understanding being produced upon them, is not the mere particulars of that day's teaching, the substance of the one parable, already delivered, or of others, that were afterwards delivered, but something else of a very different kind—may be assumed as almost self-evident; otherwise, we must suppose our Lord to be assigning a consequence as the cause of the effect, which was necessarily derived from the effect itself; whereas nothing can be the cause of itself; nor can we for a moment imagine our Lord to mean that he had taught the people in a parable which they had not understood, merely because they had not understood it. It would not be equally objectionable to suppose him to have said, I have taught them in a parable, which they could not understand, in order that they might not understand it; that is, because I never meant that they should understand it. But in this case, it would be unreasonable to reproach them with blindness, for not having perceived what was purposely hid from their eyes, or with dulness of hearing and comprehension, for not having heard and understood what had expressly been rendered unintelligible to them. We must search, therefore, for the real truth of what the people had seen without perceiving, and had heard without understanding, not in the particulars of that day's teaching, but in something which they might have perceived as well as seen, and might have comprehended as well as heard, had they been so inclined; if we would account for their being made to see and to hear, in their turn, under the disguise of parables, what they

could not perceive or comprehend, however desirous of doing so.

The same thing is clearly implied in the contrast, drawn directly after, between the use which the disciples in particular had made of their faculties of seeing and hearing, and what the people in general had done in the same way: to the point and justness of which contrast, it is manifestly necessary that the common faculties of both should be supposed to have been exercised precisely on the same subject matter; in which case, as there was no difference in their respective faculties, or in the respective objects on which they had been exerted, there ought to have been none in their respective functions, or in the effect which had followed on their use. "But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *the things* which *ye* see, and have not seen *them*, and to hear *the things* which *ye* hear, and have not heard *them*^d." A similar declaration occurs on a later occasion, Luke x. 23, 24^e. and reflects additional light on this passage.

To say that it was the subject matter of the parables recently delivered, on which the faculties both of the disciples and the people had been exercised in common, yet with so different an effect in either case respectively, would be contrary to the matter of fact; for it is evident that the disciples, until their comprehension of his parables was enlightened by our Lord's interpretations, had no more understood what they had heard, than the people.

^d Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

^e Harm. iv. 26.

Besides, can it be supposed, that what kings, and prophets, and righteous men, had desired to see and to hear, but had not seen nor heard, and which the disciples had both seen and heard nevertheless; was merely what had transpired—our Lord's parables, and such like discourses—and nothing more? May we not with confidence assume that these were kings, and prophets, and righteous men, who lived under the old dispensation? If so, what could they have so dearly longed to see and to hear, which they had not seen or heard, but which twelve obscure and illiterate Galilæans, as personal followers and believers in our Saviour had both seen and heard; except the personal advent and ministry of the Messiah himself; the incarnation and appearance in the flesh, of the promised seed; the hearing the words of his lips, the handling the bodily substance, surveying the corporeal lineaments, witnessing the glory of Immanuel, dwelling with men; the beholding in one word, the day of Christ?—that day, which one of their number in particular, whether as a king, or a prophet, or a righteous man, the greatest of all, and the father of the whole family of the faithful, had rejoiced to see; and had seen it, and was glad^f.

It is, then, the general blindness of the understanding; it is the hardness of heart, and the impenitence and incredulity, which had hitherto defeated the effect of all our Lord's miracles and discourses—of the evidence of prophecy, and of the testimony of their own scriptures in his favour—in producing the conviction of the people; that are implied by our Saviour's words to have been the moving causes of

^f John viii. 56.

the adoption of a mode of teaching them, expressly designed for concealment, and without special explanation not to be understood. So far, therefore, it was a judicial dispensation, calculated to resent the offence in kind, or to aggravate the evil by which it was produced. The people would not see, with profit and effect, what they might have seen, nor hear, what they might have heard, heretofore^ε; and therefore they were made to see and to hear now, what they could not perceive nor comprehend, even if they would.

But that it was not entirely a retributive judicial dispensation with such an end in view, appears from the consideration that, in some undoubted instances of later occurrence, the same method of address was employed towards the disciples; whose candour and docility; whose faith, and humility of disposition; or whose penetration and openness to conviction, were so remarkably contrasted on this occasion, with those of the people. The fact seems to be, that the use of allegorical parables, as vehicles of prophecy, arose partly from a judicial resentment for the national prejudice and infatuation, and partly from a spirit of commiseration on the part of our Saviour, and condescension to the weakness and ignorance of even the best disposed and most enlightened of his hearers, during his personal presence with them.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the day, on which Jesus began to teach in parables, was that when the only offence that we know to be pronounced absolutely unpardonable, that of the blas-

^ε Οί πρώτα μὲν βλέποντες ἔβλεπον μάτην,
κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον.

Æschyli Prom. Vincetus, 447.

phemy against the Holy Ghost, had lately been committed: on which account, one might perhaps conjecture that the striking change in the manner and style of his public discourses, which ensued immediately afterwards, was produced by it; and was an act of resentment for the enormous malice and perversity which had given occasion to so heinous an offence. On that principle, however, we should have expected the change in our Lord's public address so begun, to have continued and been practised not for that day only, but for the rest of his ministry: which was not the case.

I consider it to be a more remarkable coincidence, and more likely to explain the fact of the change adopted in his mode of teaching, for the reasons which are assigned as its producing causes—that the precise time when our Lord began to discourse in parables of the allegorical sort, was the middle period of his ministry; half of it being over, and the other half still to come. We should bear in mind what was the office of his personal ministry from first to last; viz. not to preach formal Christianity, but to proclaim or notify the tidings of its approach; not to begin, much less to carry into effect, the Gospel dispensation itself, but to prepare men's minds and dispositions for its reception, when the time for carrying it into effect should arrive; in a word, not to anticipate the part of the apostles, who were to come after him, but to carry forward and complete the work begun by John the Baptist, as a minister of repentance and reformation of life, who had gone before him^h. It was strictly in unison with the

^h See my Dissertations, vol. ii. Diss. 5.

character of a herald of the future kingdom, to deliver a series of predictions relating to the facts of the approaching Christian dispensation. And as to the manner in which it was proper to deliver them, if any one will consider what sort of predictions they were, and what the particular disclosures on which they turned, he will think it still more in unison with the office of a harbinger of the kingdom, who appeared at the juncture, and discharged his commission under such circumstances, as our Saviour did, to deliver his revelations of the course of things to come, in the disguise of allegories, unexplained at the time, but which should be cleared up and explained by the event—rather than in any less guarded manner.

We do not know that the nature of the reception which the Messiah was to meet with among his contemporaries, had any thing to do with the length of his official ministry; that he would have been personally conversant with them for a longer time, had they generally received him—or that the duration of his actual residence on earth was to be prematurely abbreviated, because they should generally reject him. We may presume then, that whatever was the actual interval between the appearance of the first herald of the kingdom, John the Baptist, and the day of Pentecost which ushered in the ministry of the apostles of Christianity—that interval must always have been required to elapse, between the first tidings of the approach of the kingdom, as made known by the Baptist, and the first overt act of an apostle of the Gospel, by which it was founded upon earth; whether the countrymen and contemporaries of the herald himself were

disposed generally to believe in the truth of his commission, or not.

But though the disposition of the people in general towards the herald of the kingdom, while conversant among them in the proper discharge of his ministry, could neither retard nor hasten the arrival of the kingdom itself, nor affect the gradual disclosure of every successive fact in the progress of the Christian dispensation, it would have much to do with the further question in what manner the futurity of such facts, supposing it proper that they should be communicated beforehand, was most fitly to be revealed. That it was proper for our Saviour to disclose them, if he was so inclined, no one will deny. The use and advantage of such disclosures, in proof of his own omniscience, and as one among the other arguments of the truth of his most holy religion, are self-apparent. And this point being conceded, the only question is about the mode of making them. With a docile, an ingenuous, a simple-minded and unprejudiced people, there could have been no danger in stating every fact in the progressive developement of the Gospel scheme, as plainly by words beforehand, as it was brought to light by events afterwards. With a people of a different disposition, the case would be just the reverse. If to communicate these truths was to bestow a privilege, such a people could have no claim to the privilege; and if to withhold them altogether would have been an act of resentment, they were justly obnoxious to the punishment. By adopting the middle course of communicating them beforehand, and thereby placing on record his testimony to their futurity, and sup-

plying the fullest proof of his own omniscience, but so communicating them as not to be understood at the time, our Saviour adopted the only expedient which seems to have been left, between vouchsafing the prediction of things very necessary to be foretold by himself, and yet denying the perception of his prophecies to those, who were neither entitled to expect them, nor qualified to receive them from him.

The success of his ministry, up to its middle point, was an experimental proof, how little the people at large were disposed *as yet*, and how little likely they were, in any length of time, to become disposed *at last*, to bear such disclosures openly: and even the faith and simplicity of his own disciples, in common with the rest of their age and nation, were still mixed up with so much of ignorance and prejudice, that the partial concealment of many things from them was as much an act of kindness, in condescension to their infirmity, as their total obscuration from scribes and Pharisees, or the common people in general, was an act of just retribution, upon their blindness and infatuation.

Meanwhile, the Christian world began to be provided beforehand, in these allegorical disclosures of the future, with a body of evidence that should bear a luminous testimony to the divine wisdom and foreknowledge of its Author; shining with undiminished lustre, as long as the religion should last, and sensibly perceptible wherever the religion itself has a being. They are all prophecies of the most illustrious kind, tried by any criterion, the strictest and most rigorous we can devise, for sifting and ascertaining the value of prophecy in

general. There is none of them which did not speedily begin to be verified; and there is scarcely one which has ceased to be verified, or whose fulfilment is not still going on. The greater number began to have an actual being with the beginning of the Christian dispensation; were enlarged and expanded with the growth and expansion of the Gospel scheme; and will attain to the maturity of their accomplishment, and to the utmost significancy of their meaning, only when Christianity shall have produced its entire effect, and the Gospel scheme have fulfilled its appointed part in this world. And some there are which, in the scope of their extent, pass beyond the bounds of time and sense; and though they began to be realized in the present state of being, may continue to be verified and accomplished, coeternally with eternity itself.

CHAPTER V.

Why the use of Parables is peculiar to the Gospels?

AS it was evidently possible for the apostles to have used parables, as well as our Saviour; as there could apparently be no impropriety in doing what he had done before them; and as for the purpose of general instruction, so far as such an end was likely to be promoted by the use of parables, there would seem to be an equal reasonableness in their being used by both; perhaps it may often have occurred to a reader of the New Testament, to ask why so many parables are to be met with in the Gospels, and none in the rest of the Christian scriptures? The answer to this question is not necessarily connected with the business of explaining the parables actually on record: but as it is a natural inquiry, and the solution of it will contribute to reflect further light on the true character and constitution, and the proper use and design of the parables themselves, I may be permitted perhaps, to bestow a few words upon it.

The Holy Spirit of truth and wisdom, under whose direction the apostles both spoke and wrote, no doubt, did not think fit that they should employ the medium of parable as a regular instrument of their preaching; and no doubt, had sufficient reasons for not thinking fit that they should. Perhaps it was necessary that, as in other respects, so also in this, of the mode or vehicle of their instructions, some broad line of distinction should be drawn be-

tween the teaching of the Master, and that of the disciples. Perhaps too, the subserviency of parables was most fitly to be restricted to oral and extemporaneous teaching, like all our Saviour's sermons and discourses; and was not so proper for written, premeditated compositions, such as the Epistles of the apostles. The Gospel parables, however, are twofold; and if there were general reasons why the apostles should not employ such a mode of teaching, there would probably be special reasons why they should not have recourse to this, or that kind of it.

As far then as concerns the use of allegorical parables, (the number and frequency of which properly constitute the peculiarity of the parabolic mode of teaching to the Gospels,) it is evident from what has been said about them, that the end to which such parables were subservient, was temporary; and their proper purpose being accomplished, the necessity of such means, at least for such an effect, we may presume would naturally cease.

We may easily perceive that it would not have been suitable to the office and ministry of a mere herald of the kingdom, like our Saviour, to have made known and professed, in their natural clearness, simplicity, and circumstantiality, a variety of future facts or truths; more especially in relation to himself. If these, therefore, were to be touched upon, or made known by him, it must still be darkly and metaphorically. The times themselves, and the state of the popular mind, would not have tolerated certain disclosures; which nevertheless, it might be very proper he himself should make beforehand. The only natural means, then, of making them known, or placing them on record, without

incurring the risk of too naked and incautious an exposure of their real character, was to shroud them in the disguise of allegory.

The same facts and truths, however, which, as concerning the person, the relations, the functions and offices of the Messiah, in his character of the Saviour of his people, the Shepherd of his flock, and the Head of the whole body of the faithful, our Lord himself had only half revealed in his discourses—had only darkly and figuratively attested in his own behalf; it became the apostles, when *they* entered upon their office, to proclaim publicly, openly, intelligibly every where, and to all men, as the great objects of Christian faith and trust. There could be no concealment of the character and attributes of the Messiah, after he had begun to be preached as the Author of salvation, to all mankind. The season of mystery and disguise with respect to such things was past; and would have been, if continued, not only preposterous, but fatal. If men were to be saved by faith in Christ, and by receiving and believing in him implicitly, as what he is—plainness and clearness were just as much to be studied at last, in revealing the true nature of the scriptural Messiah, as obscurity and indistinctness had been before.

In like manner, the various predictions concerning the future fortunes and treatment of the Jewish church or people; the gradual development of the successive steps in the œconomy of divine grace, affecting either the Jew or the Gentile; the beginning, continuance, and final design and effect of one and the same Gospel scheme; which were almost exclusively the subjects of our Lord's teaching

in parables, and as originally so made known, could not possibly have been understood—the event itself would at length elucidate, apply, and explain: and when the things intimated, however obscurely, by such disclosures, had begun to be matter of fact, any further mystery or reserve about them, would have been not only superfluous, if possible, but impossible, however expedient.

Considered then, as the regular vehicle of such revelations, as we find it employed to convey in the hands of our Saviour, the use of allegory could be no characteristic of the teaching of the apostles, in contradistinction from his: though so far as an appropriate mode of communication might still be requisite to impart disclosures of the future of any other kind, by means of the apostles, there would be no reason why figures and symbols, which are so often employed as the recognised style of revelation in the Old Testament, might not also be more or less the authorized language of prophecy, in the inspired writings of the New.

With regard to the use of the parables which we have denominated moral; even these, as characteristic of our Lord's manner of teaching, were comparatively much fewer in number than the allegorical, and much later in beginning to be employed: and even these, as characteristic of our Lord's mode of teaching, are adduced on the principle of examples, —and examples which consist of a history of some kind or other. These histories, for aught we know, may be real, not fictitious; about which more will be said hereafter: in which case, perhaps we may account for the fact that nothing like them is seen to occur either in the oral, or the written discourses

of the apostles, by a reason derived from their truth itself. Not possessing the omniscience of our Saviour, they might not be able to cite such examples, as cases in point, from real history ; and it might not become their character, as teachers of a sublime and spiritual morality, to have invented fictitious ones in illustration or confirmation of their doctrines. Besides, though the simplicity of the parabolic mode of instruction might be well adapted to the genius, capacities, or taste of the people among whom our Lord's ministry was exclusively transacted, a different kind of address might be requisite for the more philosophical, refined, and accomplished Greeks and Romans, to whom most of the oral, and almost all the written or epistolary teaching of the apostles was directed.

But the true grounds of the distinction between the teaching of our Saviour, in a certain respect, and that of the apostles in the same, appear to reside in the difference of circumstances under which, as teachers or preachers of morality at all, they were respectively placed. If the question of the use of moral parables, by either of them, concerns the question of their use as the ordinary vehicles of ethical doctrines and precepts—as instruments of persuasion in the hands of a moral teacher—declaring, explaining, or confirming by what they contain, and by the point on which they turn, the reasons of corresponding obligations in practice ; then, though both our Lord and his apostles were to be considered teachers of morality in general, yet since it is evident that they could not be considered the same sort of teachers in particular—the discharge of their proper duty as moral teachers respectively, might

require each of them to pursue a very different line of conduct.

If the apostles were teachers of morality, they were teachers of Christian morality: and Christian morality as such must be founded in Christian principles; and Christian principles must be deduced from Christian relations. In the more regular and systematic parts of the Epistles, we perceive accordingly, that the teaching of the apostles never takes precedence of their preaching; the eviction of Christian principles is the first thing, and the induction of Christian moral inferences, the second. They begin with instructing their converts in what they are bound to believe, before they proceed to tell them what they are obliged to practise. Doctrines prepare the way for duties: articles of faith lead directly to rules and maxims of conduct; their preaching is not only prior, but necessary to their teaching: nor is any thing ultimately enjoined upon the responsibility of Christians, as what they are bound to remember and observe, which was not first resolvable into something concerning their orthodoxy, as what they were bound to believe and profess.

We see, then, that the way in which the morality of Christian ethics required to be propounded, was rather in the shape of legitimate and consequential conclusions, than of original and independent, much less of doubtful and controvertible propositions. No reasonings were necessary about such duties, because they were inferences from reasonings already concluded: and when the apostles come to the practical parts of their subject, to find them *arguing* about the doctrines which they inculcate, in the ab-

stract, would be to find them *actum agentes*. The grounds and premises of their teaching had been settled previously, and nothing remained except to declare the particular instances of those applications in practice, to which the obligation of such principles extended.

It is to be remembered too, that, as the true ground of all moral obligation is neither more nor less than the will and decree of a superior power, who is entitled to the voluntary obedience of his responsible creatures; it was not proper for the apostles, who acted and spoke as the representatives of such a power, to have spoken or written except in the language of *authority*. Every rule of duty, and every practical admonition, which they delivered in their proper capacity of the ambassadors and representatives of their Master, had a claim to be received and obeyed by their hearers, as a *moral law*; which they would have been bound to respect and acknowledge, whether they understood the foundation and reasons of it, or not; much more, when the reasonableness of the command was selfevident, and the principles out of which the duty naturally or necessarily flowed, had been previously explained unto them. It is not usual with legislators to reason about their own laws; to think of arguing where they can command; or to try the ordinary methods of persuasion, where they have a clear right, and an undoubted ability, if need be, to use the extraordinary method of compulsion. If the sovereign authority in a particular society, or any other who is acting in his name, is publishing or making known his will to the subjects of his jurisdiction, the subordinate members of the society—(as the apostles un-

doubtedly were doing, when they were teaching their converts in the name of Christ,) what is it that we should naturally expect? Not that the supreme authority, or his organ, should be debating the merits of his conduct at every step, as if he were responsible to his subjects; or explaining, defending, and justifying every thing, which he thinks proper to will, as if his subjects must needs disapprove what they did not understand, or might lawfully disobey what they did not approve; but simply, that he should take care to make known his will to those who were bound to obey it, so circumstantially that no part of it should be undetermined; so clearly and distinctly, that no part of it should be mistaken.

Under no circumstances, then, should we have expected from the apostles, *a priori*, that they would do more than communicate to their converts, whether orally or by writing, the particulars of their duties as Christians, in the most comprehensive, compendious, clear, and sententious manner; having first satisfied them, on other grounds, of the right and authority by which they acted, in proposing such moral laws to their observance, and of the reasonableness of the principles of obligation, in which those laws were founded. They had a plain, straightforward duty to perform, which was to speak in *his* name who had sent them; a duty which did not allow them to deviate to the right hand or the left, nor to exchange the simple, authoritative language of injunction, for any of the ordinary arts and means of persuasion. Let us now consider what was, or what might be, the case with our Saviour: who, though a moral teacher as well as they, was not a teacher of such formal Christian morality as

they were: and as a teacher of morality at all, was not so in the name of another master, nor by virtue of a delegated right, as they were, but in his own name, and by virtue of a right which emanated from, and was centred absolutely in himself.

The modes of producing conviction are reduced by the writers upon Rhetoric to three in general; one of which influences or convinces the hearer, by affecting his passions; another, by satisfying his understanding; and the third, by the mere weight and authority of the character of the speaker. This last was the method most agreeable to the dignity of our Saviour's personal character; and was that which he most regularly employed. It is a peculiar characteristic of his mode of teaching the people, which each of the three first evangelists has distinctly noticed, in its proper place, *once for all*; that he taught "as one having authority, and not as the "scribes:" which does not imply merely that he taught with more wisdom and gravity, more clearness or perspicuity, more convincingness and force of reason, than the scribes, or ordinary teachers of the people, (though all that might be very true,) but simply that he taught with the air and tone, the language and demeanour, of a superior power, addressing his subjects, of a master, addressing his servants, of a lawgiver, legislating for his people. Such an one would have only to express his will, in order to have it obeyed; unless they who heard it expressed, should dare to be guilty of rebelling presumptuously against a rightful authority and jurisdiction. To suppose that the scribes, or any order of the ministers of religion among the Jews, could have talked in this strain, or assumed so lofty and dignified a tone as this,

would be to suppose they were in the place of God himself, and had a right to speak to moral agents as the supreme moral Governor alone is privileged to do. Such, no doubt, was the language in which Moses frequently addressed the Jews of old; and such was sometimes that of the prophets of the old dispensation: but in both instances, with the utmost fitness and propriety, because both Moses and the prophets even in such cases spoke only in the name of God, and what *they* said was virtually said by God.

The peculiarity then, of our Saviour's manner of teaching consisted in this: that he taught as an original instructor; as having an independent, self-derived authority; with the commanding address of a supreme moral legislator, who had only to declare his will, to render it binding on his hearers that they should obey it, or make it impossible not to be guilty of sin and rebellion, in disobeying it. We have a specimen of this manner in St. Matthew's account of the sermon on the mount^a; in which the *ipse dixit* of the speaker predominates throughout; shewing in what an authoritative way, as entitled to do so by virtue of his own power and will, he took upon himself to cancel old obligations of duty, and to impose new; to bind or to loose at his discretion; and to supersede or to reinforce the doctrine and discipline of Moses and the prophets, by a doctrine and discipline of his own. No doubt, this mode of addressing and teaching his hearers is exactly that which we should, *a priori*, have expected the moral Governor, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, to assume in speaking to his moral and

^a Chap. v. &c.

responsible creation, were he to appear among them, in a human form, for the very purpose of making known his will to them: but well might it seem new and surprising to the people, and well might it strike them with awe and astonishment; as it is said to have done.

It was not often, therefore, that our Lord had recourse to argument, as such—that is, to the second of the above methods of conviction—in enforcing a point of duty; nor ever formally and systematically, but if at all, only incidentally and by the way. Argument, however, by which I understand the possible kinds of reasoning in general, is divided by rhetoricians into the two characteristic species of the *euthymem* (or *sylogism*) and the *example*: both of which are equally intended for the conviction of the understanding, but each, under certain circumstances, may more properly be used for that purpose, than the other. The *example* has the advantage in plainness and simplicity; in being more popular, and adapted to the level of the commonest capacities, while the *euthymem* is more refined, and artificial, and requires a higher degree of intellectual ability to understand it, and greater powers of memory and abstraction to retain and follow it. The *example* is a mode of reasoning naturally accommodated to questions of debate or practice; the *euthymem* is more appropriated to researches of science, and to metaphysical or abstract reasonings. Long before the invention of an art of rhetoric, or the reduction of the principles of logic to fixed, artificial rules, the predominance of that mode of reasoning which argues from like cases in the past, to similar cases in the future, characterises the de-

liberations and speeches which occur in Homer, the most ancient of the Greek poets, or in Herodotus, the most early Greek historian: whereas no such peculiarity is discernible in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius, or the orations of Thucydides. The use of the fable, which is merely the use of an imaginary example, designed to supply the place of a real one, is of still more ancient date; and will be found to go back in the records of every nation, to a period coeval with their origin itself^b.

The moral parables of our Saviour are instances of the same mode of reasoning in general; and if they had consisted of impossible or improbable circumstances, must have been pronounced fables; and as they consist both of possible and probable, may be real histories: but whether real histories or fictitious, they are to all intents and purposes examples, and only enlarged specimens of the argument from analogy or *a pari*, purposely so contrived as to illustrate one thing by its resemblance to, or its identity with another. Such parables, in themselves, and in the use which is made of them, may be compared to graphic or sensible pictures; and our Lord's employment of them for such a purpose, resembled the practice of the ancient prophets in teaching by signs or actions. If he chose to have recourse to any means of conviction, beside the weight and authority of his own decisions, or to enforce assent to his doctrines by any form of reasoning which would best harmonize with the deference due to himself; perhaps the plainness and perspicuity, and the un-

^b For some further remarks on this subject, the reader is referred to the Appendix, chapter II. which will be found in the last volume of the work.

studied refinement which became his teaching, as well as regard to the habits, capacities, or inclinations of his hearers, might induce him to prefer the example; which by its simplicity and yet its elegance, by its artlessness and yet its lively and picturesque effect, if not by its accordance to the genius of an Oriental audience, seemed to be expressly marked out for his selection.

CHAPTER VI.

Whether the Parables are real or fictitious Narratives?

THOSE who should contend that the word *parable* necessarily denotes a fiction of some kind or other, would obviously beg the point in dispute, upon this question; and those who should draw a distinction, as some writers have done, between a parable as such, and an history as such, would draw a distinction without a difference. If we look at the original meaning of the word, it is that of *comparison, juxtaposition, contrast*, and the like; a very appropriate name for the process of adumbrating one series of things by another, as in the use of an allegory, or for the means of illustrating one truth by another, as in the use of a moral example.

Every parable of the New Testament, with which only the present question is concerned, contains more or less of history; so that every such parable is necessarily an history: nor can the meaning of these terms, in their ordinary acceptance, be otherwise than convertible, or without an absurdity, be distinguished asunder. But it is not every history, that is necessarily a Gospel parable. To the idea of such an history it is requisite that, whether made for the purpose or not, it should be produced either to illustrate some point of practice, or to personify some series of facts; in the one case, as a parabolic example; in the other, as a parabolic allegory. It is not, therefore, the mere use of history or narrative that makes a parable, but history or narrative, ap-

plied and intended for one of two particular purposes; and though no one can deny that fictitious narratives might certainly be employed for either of those purposes, yet it is equally evident that real histories, or actual matters of fact, might serve for them just as well.

There is so little difference in the outward structure of each species of parables, that whatever arguments might imply the reality of the moral, would seem to be equally applicable to that of the allegorical; of which we cannot have a better proof, than the fact that many of the latter class, which were in all probability purely allegorical, and originally intended for prophecies, have been repeatedly mistaken, and explained as moral examples. We might assume, then, apparently with equal probability or improbability, that all the Gospel parables were alike real histories, or alike fictitious; and could it be shewn that the allegorical in particular were real, we might conclude, from that fact, with still greater certainty, that the moral could not possibly be fictitious.

The reverse of this supposition, however, would not equally hold good: that the allegorical parables in particular must be concluded to consist of real histories, because it had been shewn, either necessarily or presumptively, that the moral ones did so. The double nature of the former parables gives them an outward structure, which makes them appear one thing, and an inward meaning, which renders them in reality another thing; whereas the single nature and intent of the moral are compatible with no construction of their meaning, but the outward and obvious one. The letter of the allegory being a mere

cypher, and the spirit alone being the true key to the unlocking of the text, such parables not only admit of a translation and interpretation, but require them, to be understood; and the translation or version which explains the allegory, turns out to be simple history—but history by anticipation; that is, the future, prophetically related beforehand.

There is consequently a real history at the bottom of the allegorical, in every such parable; so that they must be considered, under all circumstances, as real histories drest up in the disguise of fictitious. We must not look at these parables, as what they are in themselves, and in their outward, *prima facie* sense and meaning; but what they are in their concealed import—their inward construction; and what they become when translated and interpreted. It is not impossible for one real history to be rendered the medium of symbolically representing and communicating another; but if the real history is used merely symbolically, the reality itself becomes tantamount to fiction;—for *that* use and purpose, the matter of fact has no meaning nor reality of its own; nothing, beyond its essence and signification as a symbol. We may lay it down then as a general conclusion with respect to the allegorical parables, that either they consist of narratives which are purely fictitious—which in no sense are matters of real fact—or if they consist of true histories, that is, of narratives which in themselves are made up of matters of fact (which is a possible case)—even the matter of fact, *pro hac vice*, and as the symbol and vehicle of something beyond itself, is to be considered equivalent to fiction. The only true history, or series of real matters of fact, in such pa-

rables, is that which lies at the bottom of the external.

With respect, however, to the parables of the second class, which were mere simple histories, and practical examples, requiring to be received and construed exactly as they were delivered; possessing neither use nor purpose, beyond their meaning as declared and applied in their exposition; the case may be very different. Such parables must be either purely and totally fictitious narratives, or purely and totally real ones; and either, exactly as they are, or as what they appear to be.

Now what criterions have we, to judge of the reality of a moral example in a given instance, except such as are furnished by its own constitution? and what evidences of its own truth and reality can a given history furnish, but its intrinsic probability, and its consistency in all its parts? The narratives contained in the moral parables, are not merely possible *per se*, (and therefore such as to bar any antecedent improbability of their being true,) but probable also: nor are they merely probable, so as to warrant a kind of weak presumption of their truth, but withal so eminently probable—so close an approximation to realities, both in the matter and in the manner of the relation—so consistent with nature and experience, tried by any rule we may please to adopt; that nothing but the force of inveterate prejudice—nothing but the confirmed habit of associating with the idea of a parable the notion of a fictitious history, could induce us to suppose they were not real.

Our Saviour's moral parables are surely not like the apologues of Æsop: yet if both alike are really

fictitious, what is there to discriminate them asunder? and why may not the fables of the one be called parables, and the parables of the other fables? But the fables of Æsop, however ingenious, are still fables, and would not impose on a child: the parables of our Saviour, if not real histories, are yet so like them, that we must do violence to our first impressions, on hearing or reading them, not to believe them real. In reading the compositions of the most celebrated masters of the apologue, we are conscious that we are reading fictions from the first; and it requires an effort of the mind to forget that, and to persuade ourselves that we are reading a reality. But in perusing the moral parables of the New Testament, the delusion, if it is a delusion, is all on the other side: it requires an effort to recover the mind from the conviction that she is perusing truth; that after all, she is not imposed on merely by fiction, artfully disguised under the semblance of truth.

It appears to me, that we shall only think as we ought of the character of our Lord; we shall only do justice to the dignity and importance of the ends which he proposed by the delivery of his parables, if we suppose that all those, which *he* records as *true* histories, for a moral design and application, were really so. Perhaps, we cannot believe them to be false, that is, fictitious, or the work of his own imagination,—without detracting somewhat from that refined and exalted conception, which every pious and right minded Christian would willingly entertain, of the purity, simplicity, candour and benevolence, the habit of thought, the turn and disposition of mind, of Jesus Christ. For it cannot be

denied that, in these moral pictures of human nature and human character, if there is a bright side of the prospect, there is also a dark side; if there is something to do honour to the subject, there is also something to reflect discredit upon it; which it were more desirable to suppose was the description of what was real, than the invention of what was fictitious.

The character of the unmerciful creditor, in the first of the number, is a portrait of selfishness, ingratitude, and insensibility. The priest and the Levite, in the second, are examples of rooted prejudice, and almost unnatural inhumanity. The rich man, in the third, was a voluptuary in practice, before he shewed himself a fool in deliberation. The steward, in the fourth, fell into disgrace by being false to his trust; and added to his fault, by an unjustifiable expedient to remedy the effects of his disgrace. Dives, in the fifth, was not only a voluptuary, and probably a libertine, and certainly an unfeeling and uncharitable man in this life, but is represented as in torments after his death. The judge, in the sixth, was one who feared not the power of God in the other life, nor respected the opinion of men in this. The Pharisee, in the seventh, is proud, censorious, and puffed up with self-conceit: depreciating others as lowly in the one scale, as he exalts himself above measure in the other.

It is not sufficient to say of each of these representations, that they are, after all, agreeable to experience, and the way of the world: for they are so, only because such things are known to have sometimes really happened. Nor yet, that the drift of the representation, or the argument of the parable,

justifies their being so constructed. So far from that, I should rather insist on the use and application made of these narratives, as implicitly a proof that they are real. The end of a certain representation may be just the same, whether the representation itself be real or fictitious: but an argument from fact, as a case in point, is necessarily stronger than an argument from mere hypothesis; and the utility of fiction itself, by way of example, depends altogether on the tacit reception of fiction for truth.

I have already observed, that there is no necessary connexion between the idea of a fiction, and that of the constitution, the use or the purpose, of a moral parable. Such a parable is merely an example; and no one will maintain that an example must needs be a fable; that real history cannot instruct or exemplify, as much as fictitious. And if the doctrine, for which the parable was designed, be something real, it appears only consistent and natural, that the grounds on which it is proposed, the parallel by which it is enforced, should be something real also. Is it not unnatural, and out of character, not to say preposterous, in the case of evangelical truth, that the moral of a parabolic history should be of vital importance, of necessary obligation, and of real practical application; yet the history by which it is inculcated, the principles on which it is enforced and prescribed, be a mere nonentity—purely gratuitous, and unsubstantial,—an ingenious effort of the fancy, but nothing more? Take away the basis, under such circumstances, and what becomes of the superstructure? Deny the reality of the example,—say that the thing which is supposed, as a parallel instance, never happened, nor any

thing like it—and what becomes of the thing exemplified; what is the validity, much more the necessity, of the inference drawn from it?

In one parable, the necessity of our freely forgiving the offences of others against ourselves, if we hope to be freely forgiven our own offences against God, is enforced by the example of a certain debtor, who having been freely forgiven a very large debt, by his own creditor, yet having just afterwards refused to forgive his fellow servant a paltry sum, which he owed to himself; had his former forgiveness retracted by his master, and was treated with much more severity, on account of his behaviour to his fellow servant, than he would have been, under any circumstances, before. No one will deny that this example would prove much more, as a case in point to the doctrine in question, if the alleged matter of fact be supposed to have really happened, than if not.

A Jew was instructed to consider every one his neighbour, without regard to place or country, who merely stood in need of his assistance, by the light of the example of a stranger, who treated a stranger, under such circumstances, with all the compassionate kindness of one neighbour to another, when his own countrymen, and perhaps his neighbours, had left him unpitied to perish. Must we, after all, suppose that no Samaritan ever did this, and no Jews ever neglected to do it to one of their countrymen, actually in distress? If so, what becomes of the analogy, and where is the case in point, which really supplies an answer to the question, who is my neighbour?

The insecurity of the possession of life in the

midst of abundance is proved by the instance of a rich man, suddenly cut off by the stroke of death, at the very moment when he was making most sure of continuing to live, and to enjoy himself in plenty, for years to come. Is this doctrine a consequence of such an example, if nothing of the kind ever happened?

The possibility, and at the same time, the expediency of so using riches, though not our own, and sometime to be parted with, while we still possess them, as not to fail of a better possession in their stead, when they are finally surrendered up by us; are both illustrated by the example of a certain person, also in possession of a trust, but about to part with it, who made such an use of his trust, while he still retained it, as not to be the worse off in his circumstances, when he had given it up. I think this example, too, requires to be considered a real matter of fact, to give force and point to the application which is immediately made of it.

The tendency of mere importunity to obtain its end, and so the success of constant, importunate prayer to God, are enforced and illustrated by the case of a suitor, who, by the mere dint of importunity and perseverance, extorted from the object of her suit, the very thing which no consideration of equity, right, or justice, would otherwise have induced him to grant. Surely this example would not prove half so much of the probable success of mere importunity with a righteous judge, like God, if no poor widow was ever actually successful by virtue of mere importunity with an unrighteous judge; like that in the parable.

There is not, in the moral parables, a single cir-

cumstance which is incapable of being reconciled with the supposition of their reality; yet there is something in almost all of them, which, however unimportant it may appear in itself, can best be explained only by the supposition that it is real; something too trifling to be designed, yet too determinate to be accidental: and therefore probably an actual circumstance of a reality.

The allegorical parables have been shewn, with great probability, to be all real histories, when considered not in themselves, or as what they appear to be; and therefore, on the principle of the opposition between the different species of the same *genus*, the moral ones may be presumed to be real histories, considered in themselves, or as what they seem to be. If not, what difference is there in reality between them?

I can imagine no general objection to this conclusion, *a priori*, except one of the two following—either that it is not probable such histories should all have happened, exactly as we have them recorded; or if they did, that they would be known to our Saviour, and by him be made known to others.

Now, if such transactions could not have happened, as we find them recorded, they would not even be possible, much less probable: whereas both must be admitted to be true of our Saviour's moral narratives. And if they could not have been known to our Saviour, he could not have been omniscient, as we know he was; nor would he be competent to judge those actions, as man, hereafter, (which we are told he will,) that he does not know, as man, already. And so far from their not being such as, if he knew them, he might fitly make known to

others; the moral instructions which he grounds upon them, are most worthy of all men to be received; the use to which that knowledge is turned in his hands, is most becoming the character even of omniscience itself.

The parable of the good Samaritan is one which very many commentators have agreed to consider as the narrative, most probably, of a real transaction: yet it is the narrative of what passed in secret, and could be known only to the narrator himself. Nor would it be easy to shew on what peculiar grounds of intrinsic probability, this parable is to be considered real, more certainly than the rest of its proper class. There is another parable, that of the Pharisee and the publican, of which it appears to me, the reality is almost demonstratively certain: and this conclusion about it, if true, would prove our Saviour to have been acquainted not only with the most private actions of men, but with their very thoughts, their prayers and meditations; as indeed, there is abundant evidence to prove that he was.

It would be a precarious assumption to say, that the use of moral parables, by our Saviour, supposing them to consist of fictitious histories, may perhaps be accounted for by the custom of the times, or the familiarity of a similar practice all over the east^a. I do not deny either the antiquity, or the

^a Familiare est Syris, observes Jerome, et maxime Palæstinis ad omnem sermonem suum parabolas jungere: ut quod per simplex præceptum teneri ab auditoribus non potest, per similitudinem exemplaue teneatur: iv. Pars. i. 85. *ad prin.* in Matt. xviii.

While we admit the fact of this custom, we may very well

universality, of the use of allegory, metaphors, figures, or parables, among the nations of the east, in general; but I should deny that any such parables as our Saviour's moral histories, any such instances of the application of parable in teaching, as he has, with so much skill and felicity, exemplified in the use of his own, can be produced from the records of the times, or illustrated, much less rivalled, by parallel instances in the hands of rabbis or magi, or any description of moral teachers in the east.

The parables to be met with in the Old Testament are only three in number; two of them purely and simply apologues or fables, as much as any of Æsop's; and the third, the parable of Nathan addressed to David, a possible history, which might have been real, but which the prophet's application of it shews to have been meant for an allegory, that is, a real history disguised under a fictitious. And as to the parables of the Jewish doctors, which Dr. Lightfoot has produced from the Gemara, to illustrate those of our Saviour, they are not worthy to be named or noticed by the side of the parables of the Gospel. They may be the most ancient which Dr. Lightfoot could find; but as the Gemara itself

doubt the truth of Jerome's explanation of it: especially if by parables or comparisons here, he meant figures, metaphors, or allegories; which in most cases, instead of throwing fresh light on what was before dark and mysterious, would tend to make it still darker and more mysterious; and to explain *obscurum per obscurius*. The truth is, the use of parables is in simple accordance with the genius of Oriental thought and expression; which every where, and at all times, have been characteristically distinguished by a passionate fondness for hyperbole, metaphor, circumlocution, figure, and allegory.

was not compiled until long after the Christian æra, who shall demonstrate to us that any such rabbinical parables were in existence, before the time of our Saviour? Jejune and meagre as they are, flat and insipid as they must appear to every reader of taste, they have not, for ought we know, the merit of originality itself: they may be only bad imitations of the beautiful, sprightly, and picturesque productions of the Gospel narrative.

But the use of parables, whether by rabbis, or magi, or priests, or philosophers, of antiquity, would prove nothing on the point in dispute, with regard to our Saviour's moral histories. For though the use of fiction, in aid of truth, and in the way of moral instruction, may be innocent and commendable, perhaps even expedient or necessary, in the hands of a merely human instructor, yet in the hands of a divine moralist like our Lord, the use of such means can never be allowed to be necessary, nor therefore to be expedient or appropriate. Can we suppose such a teacher, deliberately to prefer to recommend and enforce truth by fiction, when it was equally possible and easy for him, and was certainly so much the more in unison with his character, if it was not beyond his ability, to recommend and illustrate truth by truth?

Lastly, if the moral parables are really so many matters of fact, then we may perceive a reason why our Lord might employ them primarily and properly for a moral purpose; and with such an application to the profit and edification of his hearers, as those discourses in their own nature were calculated to furnish: and secondarily and improperly, even with some regard to the collateral and accidental advan-

tages of that mode of teaching in general, as arising whether from its novelty, or its pleasurableness, or its simplicity, or its accordance to the genius and tastes of his audience. These advantages, though natural and probable concomitants of the use of such parables, would not be the effects properly contemplated by them, nor describe the final purpose, the special reasons, which gave occasion to them. But if the parables themselves were really invented, and not derived from matter of fact, these secondary considerations seem to be the only purposes that could have been consulted in their use: the subordinate, collateral effects appear at least to become the principal and primary motives, which must have suggested the adoption of this mode of teaching. In the one case, we might have concluded that our Lord hoped to please, because he was bound to teach; in the other, we must have inferred that he hoped to teach, because he was bound to please. This would be to suppose that our Lord thought it more important to please his hearers than to teach them; that he deemed the pleasurableness of his discourses a greater object of his personal concern than their instructiveness; and considered the form or manner of his doctrines more essential than the matter or substance. The contrary alone can be the truth. Such an instructor as our Lord might have no objection to please, while he was teaching, or as a mere consequence of that; but we cannot suppose that he would purposely seek to please with a view to teach, or attempt the one first, in the hope of effecting the other along with it, or after it.

CHAPTER VII.

On the allusions to the domestic relations of antiquity, which occur in the Parables.

THERE is in almost all the parables, a distinction of agents, or *dramatis personæ*, into principal and subordinate; between whom a proper but variable relation, according to the circumstances of the case, is seen to hold good. The most common relation of all, and one which still holds good even where other relations of private or social life are exemplified in the situation of the same parties, is the relation of master and servant; or that which prevails between the head and the members of one and the same family.

The original term, which expresses this relation in the case of the subordinate or inferior parties, is not adequately rendered by “servant;” being in fact equivalent to “slave.” Now between a slave and a servant the difference, according to modern notions, is immense; and much more so, according to the notions of antiquity, in conformity to which every allusion to the habits and usages of private or social life, in the parables, is necessarily to be understood. The Greek or the Latin language has no one term exactly equivalent to our vernacular word of *servant*; nor has our language a word of equally common use and occurrence, which would precisely express the Greek δούλος, or the Latin *servus*.

So peculiar is the relation of master and slave—so much a relation *sui generis*—and such are the re-

reciprocal rights and obligations which it entails on the superior and inferior parties, respectively; that the ordinary notions of justice, propriety, equity, or the like, which we consider applicable to the general domestic relation of master and servant, are quite out of character and inappropriate to the particular relation of master and slave. It is very important then, to the right understanding of the parables, and to the perception of the truth and fitness, the justness and reasonableness, of many of their circumstances, to have the nature and constitution of this fundamental relation fully cleared up and explained. But as that could not be done, at present, without a variety of details, which would detain us too long, and however interesting to the classical reader, might not be equally so to the general one; I have reserved it for a separate discussion in the Appendix, at the end of the work.

Notwithstanding the difference of signification between the modern term to express the relation of the inferior members of a household, and the ancient one; we owe so much deference, perhaps, to the distinction of modern and ancient usages, and to the force of prejudice, as to retain the word servant in speaking of that relation. Among other effects of the change in the domestic relations of private life, from the despotic and servile, to those of the master and servant, this is one, that the original name for the inferior relation, which did not carry with it formerly the particular notion of ignominy or reproach, could not now be rendered by the corresponding term slave, without involving that idea. Remembering then, only, that the original terms for the relation in question, in a given instance, are something which

imply a much greater degree of authority and dominion on the one hand, and of subjection and dependence on the other, than can be conceived, under any circumstances, to hold good of the proper domestic relation of master and servant ; we may continue henceforward to speak of the principal party in such relations, as the master, and of the subordinate parties, as the servants.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the distinction of the members, or component parts of the visible Church; and on the figurative or parabolic mode of denominating them respectively.

THE visible church of Christ, from its first foundation to the present time, wheresoever it has existed, and in whatsoever detached communities, whether among the Hebrews first, or the Gentiles subsequently; considered in respect of the persons or congregation who compose it, and their mutual relations to each other, is every where divisible into Christ as the head, and professing believers as the members, of one and the same body, which is the church.

And as the head of the visible church is every where one and the same, viz. Christ, so are the members every where capable of being distributed into two, but only two, comprehensive divisions, which shall include the whole, and at the same time discriminate them asunder—the ministers of religion on the one hand, and the laity or people on the other.

And as the relation of the same members to the same head of the same society, as such, and *vice versa*, must be one and the same; so the common relation both of the ministry and of the laity to Christ, and of Christ to the ministry and the laity, respectively, is one and the same; of the former, considered as the members, and of the latter, considered as the head, of the same community: and therefore this relation is capable of being expressed

upon either hand, according to the nature of the case, by the same proper, or the same metaphorical, designation alike.

The relation, however, of the ministers of religion to Christ, as that of one comprehensive division of the members of the church to the head, though the same *in genere* with the common relation of the people, as the other component part of the same congregation, is something *in specie* different from theirs. And so, *vice versa*, is the relation of Christ, though the common head of the church, to each division of its members in particular. It follows therefore, that the general denomination for the relation of the people to Christ, or conversely for that of Christ to the people, will not express the specific relation of the ministers of religion to Christ, or of Christ to the ministers of religion : though as both these latter relations are a particular species of the others, the term which is proper to express *them* may be a particular species of the term which is most fit to describe the *other*.

Whatever positive differences there may be in the kinds or orders of the ministers themselves, the relation of all the ministers of religion to Christ, in contradistinction to that of the people, will be one and the same. As no part of the people, though a certain part of the church, they must all agree in the possession of some characteristic property, which discriminates them all from the people, and identifies them all with each other. Such being the case, the term which expresses this circumstance of any one of their orders or kinds, will express it of the rest.

In like manner, the proper relation of the people to Christ, considered as contradistinguished to that

of the ministry, must be one and the same in itself; and therefore, admit of being characterized and expressed in reference to them all alike, by one and the same denomination.

Now the proper relation whether of the ministry or of the people to Christ, determines their proper duty, as necessarily consisting in the discharge of such functions, as naturally flow from the relative character supported by each respectively. Hence, as the proper characteristic relation of the ministers of religion to Christ is the same in all, so the duty of the ministers of religion, as arising out of that relation, is the same in all. The same thing is true of the proper duty of the people.

And as the proper duty of the ministers of religion as such, is the same in all, so the proper reward of the observance of that duty, or the proper punishment of its non-observance, is the same to all. And so of the proper reward of the performance of the proper duty of the people, or the proper punishment of its non-performance. Hence, the reward which may be seen to be promised, or the punishment which may appear to be denounced, in a special instance, to the obedience or disobedience of the duty incumbent upon either of them in their proper capacity, will be the instance *in particular* of the proper reward of obedience, or the proper punishment of disobedience, which is promised or denounced to the ministers of religion as such, or to the people as such, *in general*.

Now the common relation of Christ, as the head of the church, to both the ministers of religion and the people, as its component parts or members, may justly and fitly be expressed by the common relation

of a master to the subordinate members of the same family or household, in general; and conversely, the common relation both of the ministry and of the people, as the component parts or members of the body of the church, to Christ as its head, may just as properly be expressed by the common relation of the subordinate members of a family or household, in general, to its principal or head in particular. This being the case, the personal relation of Christ to Christians may be characterised by that of the *κύριος* or master, and the reciprocal relation of Christians to Christ, by that of the *δοῦλοι* or servants, who constituted, in ancient times, one and the same family, distinguishable into its principal and independent, and its subordinate and dependent parts or members, respectively.

The propriety of this mode of characterising and expressing the relation in question on both sides, after what has been premised on the nature of the despotic and servile relation in general, must be self-evident; first, as the relation in question is the relation of God or the Creator, on one hand, to his rational creatures, on the other; the former implying a right of dominion the most absolute, and the latter, a right of subjection the most complete, which can be imagined; a view of the relation, however, in respect to which Christians themselves stand only on the same footing as the rest of mankind: secondly, as it is the relation of the Redeemer on the one hand, to the redeemed on the other; of Him, who has bought or purchased, and of those, who have been bought or purchased, at a *price*; the former, implying an absolute right of owning or possessing, in the superior party, and the latter an

absolute right of being owned or possessed, in the inferior party: a view of their proper relation, in which Christians as such stand by themselves, and are contradistinguished to all who do not partake in the benefits of the Christian sacrifice, or in the obligation entailed thereby.

The use of the same symbolical mode of expressing these various relations is still more exact and appropriate, when the purpose for which it is employed, refers to Christ as the head of the church, in the special capacity of the author of reward or punishment to the personal obedience or disobedience of any of his servants alike; and to Christians, as the members of the church, in the special capacity of those who are bound, in virtue of their common or their peculiar relation to Christ, to a certain personal duty of their own in behalf of Christ, with the prospect of certain personal consequences to themselves, to be dispensed by Christ.

Lastly, the proper specific relation of Christ to the ministers of religion in particular, is that of a master to servants whom he has left in trust, and invested with part of his own authority, for the benefit of the rest of his household; that is, of a master to a steward of his property, or to that description of servant in ancient times, who, in order to distinguish him from the rest of a common household, is known by the name and office of *οἰκονόμος*. The nature and character of this office we shall have occasion to explain more at large hereafter.

And such being the case with the proper specific relation of Christ to the ministers of religion, it follows that his proper specific relation to the people, or to the complex of Christians in general, whatever

else it may be, and whether the relation of a master to his servants in some capacity or other in general, or not, is yet not the relation of a master to his steward, that is, to the *οἰκονόμος* of his household, in particular. What it is, indeed, will be explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

On the œconomy of Probation, and its counterpart, the œconomy of Retribution.

IT may be taken for granted, because it is capable of being proved from scripture, that as there is a visible church of Christ, so there is an invisible; but whereas the visible is now in being, the invisible is still to come; and whereas the visible exists upon the earth, the invisible does not exist at present on earth, whether it is hereafter to exist there or not.

It may also be assumed, that as Jesus Christ is the head of the visible church, so is he likewise of the invisible; and as Christians, his servants, are members or component parts of the visible, so will they be of the invisible. It follows from these premises, first, that the final end of the constitution of the church on earth, is one which makes it temporary and transient; being always designed to conduct to the church in heaven, and ultimately to be consummated therein: secondly, that none can be members of the invisible church, which will result out of the visible, who have not previously been members of the visible, which precedes and prepares the way for the invisible.

Further, it may be taken for granted, that to become a member of the invisible church, to be admitted into the society of the congregation of that church, is to be put in possession of the inheritance and kingdom, prepared for the righteous from all

eternity. To belong, therefore, to the society of the invisible church, is the reward proposed to the personal obedience of every individual professing Christian, at present a member of the visible church, in this life; and the attainment of that reward is the consummation of his ultimate personal happiness, in another state of being.

It follows from this consideration, that whereas the church on earth consists of merely professing Christians, whether nominal or real, the invisible church in another state of being, can consist of believing or faithful Christians only. But if this be the case, it follows of necessity that before the formation of the invisible church, as ultimately resulting out of the visible, some process of separation is requisite, whereby the members of the visible, though mixed and confounded together at present, may be distinguished asunder, and the really good and faithful be discriminated from the merely seeming and nominal.

Now, in order to such a separation, and before it can be carried into effect, it is equally necessary that the good should previously be known and ascertained from the bad, by some infallible criterion: and in order to be so known and ascertained, it is necessary that some period or process of trial should first be conceded to both. And as the process of separation which distributes them asunder at last, is one and the same in respect of both, so must the process of trial also which discriminates them previously from each other, be one and the same in respect of both. The good, in order to be recognised as the good, must not be tried by a distinct rule from the bad; nor the bad, with a view to the

same result, by a distinct rule from the good ; but both by the same. And since they are each members of the same visible church, before the separation in question, though not of the same invisible church, after it ; it follows that the process or scheme of trial is something which they must both undergo previously, and the process or scheme of separation something which they must both undergo finally, in their proper capacity as members of the existing visible church ; and in that capacity only. This process of trial I call the œconomy of probation ; and this process of separation, with the consequences to which it leads in respect to both classes of its subjects, I call the œconomy of retribution.

It is evident, therefore, that the œconomy of probation in this sense, precedes and conducts to the œconomy of retribution ; and that the œconomy of retribution arises out of and concludes the œconomy of probation. It is also evident that the subjects of both are the members or congregation of the visible church, and coexistent with both is the existence of the visible church ; the œconomy of probation going along with the continuance and duration of the church on earth, and the œconomy of retribution preceding the formation of the church in its future state of being, and consequently standing nearly in an equal relation to both states of the church, as the last act in the consummation of the one, and the first step in the constitution of the other.

It seems essential, then, to the doctrine of an œconomy of probation, whether as represented in parables or not, that it be described to conduct, and as always designed to conduct, to a final œconomy of retribution ; and conversely, to that of an œconomy

of retribution, that it be described to follow, and as intentionally carrying into effect the purpose of a previous œconomy of probation—in reference to the same subjects or persons: but that each in their primary design and purpose should appear to go no further than the state of things, at present in existence, upon earth; and that neither of them, or only the latter, should have any thing to do with the state of things which, whether upon earth or in heaven, may hereafter supersede that which exists at present.

Again, since our Lord Jesus Christ, as the head of the invisible church, just as much as that of the visible, stands still in the relation of a master to Christians; and Christians, as the members of the invisible church not less than as members of the visible, stand still in the relation of his servants to Christ; it follows that the œconomy of probation preparatory to the œconomy of retribution, is an œconomy, undergone by Christians in their proper capacity of the servants of Christ, and the œconomy of retribution which carries into effect the final end of an œconomy of probation, is a retribution awarded to Christians in their proper capacity as the same: and consequently, that the œconomy of probation is something imposed by Christ, and that of retribution is something dispensed by Christ, to their respective subjects, in his proper capacity of the Lord and Master of the church. The final end, then, both of the œconomy of probation, and also of the œconomy of retribution, is something which concerns Christ himself in the latter capacity, as much as Christians in the former; that of the œconomy of probation being to discover who are his real servants among all those who are nominally

so; and that of the œconomy of retribution being to distribute to each, in consequence of this discovery, their appropriate recompense of reward.

But if such be the purpose designed by the scheme of probation, preparatory to that of retribution, it seems absolutely necessary to its attainment, that Christians, as the servants of Christ, should be left for a time to themselves: that is, no such scheme of trial could begin, or be carried on, during the continuance of Christ himself upon earth, as personally a witness of the conduct of all or any of his servants. I say, however, for a time: since it is not less evident that, supposing Jesus Christ to be personally gone away from his church on earth, in order that such a scheme of probation might begin and proceed, it could never be concluded, or followed by a scheme of retribution, without his return sometime or other, to take cognisance in person of the behaviour of his servants during his absence.

The right of a master to the services of his proper dependents, and the obligation of the dependents to render those services to their proper master, are the same whether he himself is present or absent: but the motives to obedience or disobedience on the part of the servants, and therefore the merits of obedience or disobedience, are not exactly the same whether their master is present or absent. If the misconduct of a servant under the very eyes of his master, is entitled to resentment at all, it must be entitled to instant resentment, and be followed by instant punishment: and if the good conduct of a servant, under the same circumstances, is entitled to approbation or reward, it must be followed by instant approbation and instant reward. There would

be neither the same meritoriousness in the obedience of the inferior party, nor the same opportunity for his disobedience, during the presence of the superior, as during his absence. The obedience of servants to be meritorious, must be free; and to be free, must be voluntary; rendered on the principle of duty alone. A motive of fear might constrain to an unwilling obedience on the one hand, and a motive of self-interest might tempt to it on the other, where ill desert was resented by immediate punishment, and good desert encouraged by immediate reward.

The personal zeal, fidelity, or attachment, which are the producing causes of the willing and cheerful obedience of servants, whether to an absent or a present master, will be followed of course by their natural effects even when he is at hand, but will not be known to others, nor acknowledged as the true and proper causes of the effect produced, except when he is absent. The personal indolence and carelessness, the want of personal attachment, or personal principle, in servants, which even under the superintendance and inspection of their master, not unfrequently lead to their deliberate violation of his will; will much more naturally conduct to that result, when they are removed from his observation: or if they were restrained from breaking out into action merely by the presence of the superior party, it can scarcely fail but that they will operate, according to their natural tendency, the moment he is personally removed from view.

If the object of a master, then, were to ascertain the individual genius, disposition, or fidelity of his servants, the method which he would ordinarily resort to for that purpose, would be to place

them in a situation of trust, with the management of something committed to their care; to allow them an interval of absence and separation from himself, sufficient to put their principle to the test; to exempt them from the influence of any motive which might produce an unwilling or an interested obedience; and to leave them as much as possible to the single operation of the sense of duty. Still more likely would he be to adopt this expedient, if the end of the discovery of the characters of his servants were some further profitable use, to be made of their talents and capacities; some more enlarged confidence, to be reposed in their good disposition; some ulterior reward, to be assigned to their meritorious zeal and fidelity. Hence, if Jesus Christ, as the master of Christians in general, deals with them after the manner in which human masters ordinarily deal with their servants, it was to be expected that a similar œconomy of probation would be employed by him, for the sake of discovering the personal character, zeal, and attachment of any of his servants, with a view to the same ultimate œconomy of retribution, in the dispensation of reward or punishment, according to the results of the discovery; as any merely human master also might employ.

The duty of the subordinate members of the same household, in respect of their common master, is the same in general to all; viz. the obedience which each, in his proper station, is bound to render to his master's will. Where, however, the subordinate personages are many and various, while the principal personage is one and the same, the duties incumbent on the inferiors, in deference to the will of the superior, will be many and various also; and the

duties of one department will differ respectively from those of another, though all are alike required to be discharged for the sake of the master alone. The great families of antiquity belonged to single masters; but they consisted of numerous divisions of inferiors, all of which in a well regulated household, had a work or function of their own, differing indeed from the rest, but exercised and pursued in common with theirs, for the sole good and advantage of their master.

The visible church, as we have seen, is compared to an *œcia* or family of this description, of which Christ is the common Lord and Head, and Christians are the common subordinate or dependent members, distinguished like other households, into two (but only into two) comprehensive divisions, the ministers of religion, and the people. Now, with respect to a family of this sort, the temporary departure of its master, leaving his household behind him, constituted as it always was—that is, leaving each class and department of its members to pursue their proper business, as before—would be the commencement of an *œconomy* of probation to his household: and his return, to inquire into the course of things during his absence, and to take cognisance of the personal good or ill desert of each of its departments, while he was absent, would be the commencement of an *œconomy* of retribution; since it cannot be doubted that he would both institute such a scrutiny into the behaviour of one and all of his dependents during his absence, and would dispense such proper notes of censure or approbation, as the results of the investigation might shew to be just and reasonable. The masters of antiquity possessed

full powers to qualify them for such an inquiry, even to the infliction of capital punishments upon their slaves, and much more of any below them.

In like manner, the departure of Jesus Christ into heaven at the ascension, when he was personally removed from the immediate or future cognisance of his church on earth, constituted the beginning of an œconomy of probation in respect of Christians, considered as his servants; and his return to judgment, to resume his personal cognisance of the state of things on earth, by an inquiry into the life and conduct of every individual member of his church, will be the beginning of an œconomy of retribution. Such a departure of Jesus Christ, and for such a purpose with regard to the church, seems to be intimated in the following verse of St. Mark: “As a
“ man, who was abroad, having left his household,
“ and given authority to his servants, and to each
“ *of them* his work, commanded the porter also that
“ he should watch ^a :” the ideas of which description, in their primary sense, are evidently borrowed from the known constitution of a household of antiquity in general—supposing what would be the case with that, if the departure of its master had taken him away for a greater or a lesser time from home; and in their secondary, are not less clearly designed to be understood of what was about to ensue in the constitution of the church, considered in like manner as the household or family of its proper master—by virtue of his own approaching departure into heaven, and personal separation from it.

It appears essential, then, to the doctrine of an œconomy of probation, that it should affirm or imply

^a Chap. xiii. 34.

the fact of the absence of Christ; and to the doctrine of an œconomy of retribution, that it should affirm or imply the fact of his return. Without his departure, the œconomy of probation could not be supposed to begin; and without his return, it could never be supposed to have ceased. The duration, therefore, of such an œconomy is strictly coextensive with that of the absence of Christ; or in other words, with that of the being and continuance of the visible church. For this church began to have a being within ten days only of the departure of Christ himself; and its being will be fulfilled, and its consummation may be expected, simultaneously with the return of Christ to judgment. To an œconomy of probation, however, as preparatory only to an œconomy of retribution, it seems further essential, that the fact of the departure of Christ should be described as past, and his consequent absence as matter of present certainty; but the fact of his return, as to come, and therefore as matter of faith, and of future assurance only.

The period of probation being understood as preliminary to the period of retribution, the latter may be said to begin, whenever the former ends. The expiration of the period of probation, to whomsoever, and whensoever, it takes place, is to them, and at that time, the same thing as the coming of Christ; and conversely, the coming of Christ to whomsoever and whensoever it takes place, determines to them their period of probation. Hence, there may be as many different periods of trial, or as many different senses of the phrase, œconomy of probation, as there can be periods of the return of Christ, or senses of the phrase, coming of Christ.

Among all these senses, indeed, one only can be the literal and proper: and among all the corresponding terminations of the period of the œconomy of probation, one only can be literally and properly such. The coming of Christ is strictly the coming of Christ *in person*, as the departure of Christ was his departure *in person*. The true period then, of the œconomy of probation is the interval between the time of the personal departure of Christ, and the time of his personally coming again; an interval coextensive with the intermediate duration of the visible church—in which all its members are concerned, both generally and individually, alike.

Besides this coming of Christ, however, there are two others, spoken of in scripture, or reasonably to be collected from it; one, to the destruction of Jerusalem, the other, at the day of death. The term of probation, corresponding to the first of these, is the interval between the day of Pentecost, when the visible Christian church began to have a being, and the commencement of the Jewish war; concerning, as it is evident, a certain part of the visible church only, viz. the Hebrew Christians, or the members of the first founded Christian church, in particular. How this period was designed to answer the purpose of an œconomy of probation, with reference to these in particular, and how, the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem, a corresponding œconomy of retribution, will appear from the explanation of the prophecy on mount Olivet. The period or term of probation, answering to the second of the comings of Christ, is the natural lifetime of each individual Christian; a definition of the œco-

mony in question in which every member of the visible church is alike concerned; those only excepted whom the actual return of Christ to judgment, shall find still alive upon the earth.

On the other hand, it seems requisite to the doctrine of an œconomy of retribution as designed to follow upon an œconomy of probation, that while the fact or general assurance of the return of Christ, which must usher it in, is absolute and certain, the time of his return should be just as indefinite and uncertain. It is a consequence of this uncertainty, that the commencement of the period of retribution, which is also the close of the interval of probation, whensoever it takes place, must be unforeseen and unexpected. The purpose of an œconomy of probation will therefore, be so much the better answered. Men, who are taken by surprise and off their guard, are taken just as they are; and have their true character, whether better or worse, exposed without disguise. Their behaviour, then, and their situation, at the precise time of the detection, are good proofs and criterions of more than the simple fact, what they are doing at the time; viz. of what they have always done, or may justly be presumed to have done. The simple fact of what is doing under such circumstances, shews the moral quality and complexion of the agents; puts to the test the habit or mode of occupation in general; is but a sample of what the agents always have been, or always have been doing, under the same circumstances, before.

It seems essential as a motive to the obedience of servants, left in any situation of trust or confidence, that they should know themselves to be responsible

for it—that they should expect to see their master again, sometime or other: but as a motive to constant or habitual obedience, it seems further necessary, that they should never know *when* to expect him; and therefore should *always* be expecting him; that they must see him *sometime*, and may see him at *any* time. Hence as the departure of Christ began the œconomy of probation to all his servants, and his coming again will conclude it, and the duration of his absence in the mean time continues it; the practical use and application of this continued duration of the scheme of probation, for the benefit of its proper subjects, is to give them the means of preparing themselves against their Master's return, and against the time of that solemn inquiry into the conduct and demeanour of all, during his absence, which he will infallibly institute upon his return.

But as the general assurance of the return only is certain; as the time when it will take place, is left uncertain; to be prepared against the return in question, and against the inquiry that will follow upon it, is to be *always* prepared, and cannot be understood of being prepared at one time, and not being prepared at another. Now, for a constant preparation like this, it is impossible to make provision but by being intent, at all times alike, on the duties of a responsible station. He who is always at his post, and always attending to his appointed part, is always in a state of preparation; and whatever may befall, cannot be taken by surprise at one time, more than at another.

Hence, as the return of Christ, whensoever it happens, being necessarily unforeseen and unexpected by all—in respect of those, whom it will

find unprepared to render their account, may be said strictly to take them by surprise, to find them sleeping, at the time; so in respect of those, whom it discovers in a state of preparation, though it could not be foreseen by them, yet it cannot be said to surprise them—to catch them sleeping at their post—but rather on the alert and watching. The proper duty, then, of those who are placed in a state of probation, preparatory to a state of retribution, such as we have described, may be well expressed by the duty of watchfulness in general; and the proper danger to which they are liable, of forgetting their responsibility, and disqualifying themselves for rendering their account—by the danger of sloth and sleep. The neglect of their proper duty under such circumstances, is the neglect of the duty of men who should always be on the watch.

Neither the supposed vigilance, however, on the one hand, nor the lethargy and drowsiness, opposed to it, on the other, can be simple vigilance, or simple somnolency; but the complex of a certain kind of moral virtue, and of a certain kind of vice, the opposite of it, in general. To be always prepared against what must come sometime, and may come at any time, and will come unexpectedly, whensoever it arrives; may be said, without a metaphor, to be always on the watch against a surprise. But such a constant preparation as is necessary to Christian watchfulness, and to qualify each individual member of the visible church, for an event like that of his own appearing, and rendering his individual account, before the judgment seat of his Lord and Master, Christ, can be nothing less than the complex of Christian virtue in general.

On this subject, however, enough has been said, for the present. The observations above premised will be found of material use in the future exposition of the parables; to many of which they are merely preliminary, and therefore required to be mentioned in the introduction: which must be my apology to the reader for having dwelt so long upon them.

CHAPTER X.

On the various senses of the phrase, Kingdom of Heaven.

THERE is no perceptible difference in the use or signification of this form of words, "the kingdom of heaven," and of the other, "the kingdom of God," beyond a mere variety of idiom; the use of the former being peculiar to the Gospel of St. Matthew, the other being found in all the four, but chiefly in the Gospels of St. Mark and of St. Luke.

We may perhaps collect from the frequency of the former phrase, kingdom of heaven, in St. Matthew's Gospel, that it was familiar to the Jews; and such as they in particular would readily comprehend and apply. Among the significations of the phrase, then, some one, we may expect to find, will appear to be the popular one in particular; though there may be others of a more evangelical character, and beyond the mere vulgar apprehension of its meaning.

This popular notion of the phrase, is the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. The same kingdom, which the persuasions and expectations of the people so confidently anticipated, from the appearance of the Messiah, was, in its most obvious and familiar acceptance, with them, the kingdom of heaven or God^a.

Another of its meanings, as employed by our Lord himself, and, consequently, no longer in the popular, but in a strictly evangelical sense, is to denote some personal kingdom of Jesus Christ, in his

^a See Matt. xviii. i. Luke xvii. 20, 21: xix. 11.

proper capacity of the Son of man^b. If such a kingdom seems to be implied in the common expectation of the kingdom of the Messiah also, yet the popular apprehension of the immediate nature of that kingdom, and of the time and circumstances when, and with which, it was to be manifested, are sufficient to discriminate them asunder; and to make the kingdom, which is the personal right and possession of Jesus Christ, as the Son of man, a different thing from the popular notion of the kingdom of the Messiah, in his time.

A third signification of the phrase, and a more evangelical one even than the last, is, to stand for the complex of the Gospel dispensation; for the commencement, propagation, and continuance of the Christian religion, as a formal, systematic rule of doctrine and discipline, such as until then had not existed in the world: the local profession of which religion is within the limits of the visible church, and the final end is to prepare those, who embrace and profess it, by a state of probation here, for a state of happiness hereafter^c.

A fourth signification is, to stand for that ultimate state of felicity, which is proposed to the faith and well doing of believers here, as their proper and personal reward hereafter^d.

A fifth signification is, to express the local habita-

^b Matt. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27.

^c Matt. iii. 2: iv. 17. 23: xi. 11, 12: xii. 28: xiii. 11: xxiii. 14. Mark i. 14, 15: iv. 11. Luke iv. 43: vii. 28: viii. 1. 10: ix. 2. 60. 62: x. 9. 11: xvi. 16. Acts i. 3: viii. 12: xix. 8: xx. 25: xxviii. 23. 31. Rom. xiv. 17: 1 Cor. iv. 20. Col. iv. 11.

^d Matt. v. 3. 10. 19. 20: vi. 10. 33: vii. 21: xviii. 3, 4: xix. 14. 23, 24. Mark ix. 47: x. 14, 15. 23. 25: xiv. 25.

tion within which the blessed immortality awarded to the faith and obedience of Christians in this life, is to be supposed transacted (as it must be somewhere transacted) in the next^e.

The above are all the significations of the phrase, kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, in the Gospels, or out of the Gospels, which appear really to differ from each other, and to require a distinct enumeration. Among these, as is evident from the simple inspection of the passages adduced, the third and the fourth are by far the most numerous in their occurrence; so as almost to deserve to be considered the only regular and legitimate meanings of the phrase itself.

Upon these two in particular we may observe, first, that the most simple and obvious one, is the second. The phrase, kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, has a natural fitness for expressing the kind of felicity which will sometime be enjoyed in a state of being, that can be considered in any sense a personal kingdom, or reign of God; since it is impossible to detach the idea of such a state of being, from the idea of that felicity which is the necessary consequence of the presence, the protection, and the visible enjoyment of God. Secondly, that there is an intimate connexion between them: for unless the Gospel dispensation as such, is to be regarded as finite and complete in itself, it must be subservient to some further end: and unless each individual Christian meets with his proper, personal reward in

Luke vi. 20: xi. 2: xii. 31, 32: xviii. 16, 17. 24. 25: xxii. 16. 18. John iii. 3. 5. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10: xv. 50. Gal. v. 21. Ephes. v. 5. 2 Thes. i. 5. Rev. xii. 10.

^e Matt. viii. 11, 12. Luke xiii. 28, 29: xiv. 15.

believing, here, the Gospel dispensation must be intended to conduct him gradually to it, hereafter; leading through a state of probation, transacted on Christian principles of discipline in the present life, to a state of retributive happiness or misery in the next.

If then, there is this connexion between the Gospel dispensation, as such, which places mankind in a state of probation on Christian principles here, and the literal enjoyment of a kingdom of heaven hereafter—if there is no difference between them, except what there necessarily is between a cause and an effect; an instrumental means and a final end; a beginning and a consummation of the same progressive scheme; it ought not to surprise us that even the Gospel dispensation in the complex, should be expressed and described by a name, which is taken from its final relation to the kingdom of heaven or God. This is no more than is often done, when, by way of compendium, an entire process is designated by its upshot and result; or on the principle of synecdoche, the proper denomination of any one principal part of a thing, is transferred to the whole.

Nor ought it to be objected to this explanation of the origin of the phrase, that the Gospel dispensation began long since, but the kingdom of heaven, the state of retribution contemplated by it, is not yet come. The Gospel dispensation began long since, but it is not yet complete; and if it be only the first period in the duration of a certain œconomy, conducting, as the preliminary part of the process, to the last, whereby the whole in due time will regularly be brought to pass; we must wait the transaction of this first part, before we can see what is to

be the last. It is no objection, then, that the Gospel dispensation has apparently only begun to work, if it has not also ceased to work; that is, if it has not yet performed its work. It must continue to work, until its appointed part is discharged; and then, the kingdom of heaven may be literally at hand, and may without a figure be said to be the same with the Gospel dispensation itself.

Besides, though the interval between the first commencement and the final consummation of the Christian scheme may be vast in itself, and almost incalculable by our limited apprehensions of time and space, it must be as nothing in comparison of eternity, and no adequate measure of the boundless immensity of the divine omniscience. In the infinite prospect of the Author and Disposer of this scheme, the endless future is as the endless past, and all things are present at once. His own counsels were forecast from all eternity; his own purposes are accomplished through all futurity. There never was a time when he had not willed, what he has once accomplished; and there never can be a time when he will not have accomplished, what he shall once have willed. The end with him is as the beginning of his dispensations, and the issue of things as the process which conducts unto it.

Nor in communicating his purposes to mankind, is it a necessary consequence, that he must always accommodate himself to their apprehensions, and not use language strictly in conformity to his own. For we have the testimony of the inspired writers, that a thousand years are with God as one day; and that he calleth the things that are not, even as though they were already. Nor, if we consider not

merely the certainty, but also the nature, of that state of retribution unto which the Gospel dispensation is designed to conduct, will it surprise us that the kingdom of heaven should be uppermost in the thoughts and expressions of the sacred penmen, even where the Gospel dispensation was meant. The sublime and rapturous prospect of the future, discernible by the eye of faith beyond this temporary scene of things, the contemplation of those ineffable joys and glories of which Christian patience and perseverance insure us the reversion in another life, but do not convey to us the possession in this, would naturally so transport and fill their minds, as to make them habitually insensible to the interval between the present and the future; and in the language of St. Paul, forgetful of the things that were passing, or past, look only, press on, only, towards those which were before, and to come.

Besides which, if the Gospel dispensation, as placing all who are subject to it in a state of probation preparatory to a state of retribution, is something which concerns individual Christians, as much as Christians in common, the interval between the commencement of the one and the arrival of the other, in every individual Christian's case, is, strictly speaking, the interval of his lifetime. If the state of probation, as such, actually terminates with death, and the state of retribution virtually begins where the state of probation actually ends, then the interval between the Gospel dispensation, and the kingdom of heaven, as far as concerns the interest of any particular Christian in either, is neither more nor less than the period of his natural existence.

It remains for us now to inquire how far this

association of ideas between the kingdom of heaven, as such, and the Gospel dispensation, illustrates or explains the parables. The words, "The kingdom of heaven is likened, *or* the kingdom of heaven is like," (*ὁμοιωθή, or ὁμοία ἐστίν, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν,*) stand as the subject of comparison at the head of many of the parables, and might be shewn, from the nature of the parabolic history, to be virtually premised to many more. Is it not, therefore, more reasonable to suppose, that they stand in each instance for something the same, than for something different? Not indeed for something absolutely the same, or purely identical in every instance, because the parables to which they are premised have all a different moral; but for something generally at least the same, though specifically perhaps distinct.

Now, with regard to what this is; until we admit the necessity of considering the phrase itself to stand for the Gospel dispensation, as preparatory, and merely conducive, to the kingdom of heaven, we shall be painfully at a loss to discover the affinity between the obvious meaning of the terms, and the drift of the several parables, to which they are compared. But with this admission, we shall perceive a wonderful result of harmony, congruity, affinity between the objects of comparison on both sides; which is one of the strongest presumptive proofs of the truth of the admission itself, and a clear evidence of the great propriety with which the name of parables may be given to the comparison together of subjects, so related to each other.

The phrase, Gospel dispensation, indeed, is one of an extensive signification: nor is it necessary to suppose that it must always be used in the utmost

of its meaning. It is sufficient, if some one determinate member of its various component parts, be selected from the complex import of the terms, and be strictly kept in view for the particular occasion.

The Gospel dispensation, even as the state of probation preparatory to the state of retribution, may be restricted in one point of view, to the first preaching and promulgation of the Gospel: in another point of view, to the material or external constitution of the visible church: in another point of view, to the continued subsistence of the Christian religion, from its beginning to its consummation, with the causes to which it is due. In another instance, it may be limited to the rule of proceeding with respect to one main article of the discipline of the Gospel dispensation, the forgiveness of sins, or the offences of Christians against God, as dependent on their forgiveness of injuries, or the offences of others against themselves. In another instance, and as still a part of the same complex notion of the Gospel dispensation, the phrase may stand for the gratuitous extension to the Gentile of the spiritual privileges, which on condition of certain performances, were the covenanted right of the Jew. In another sense, it may be restricted to the mere overture of Christianity and Christian privileges, first to the Jew, and secondly to the Gentile; with its different reception by each. In another instance, the phrase may be used, for the duty of Christian vigilance, incumbent on Christians as such, in order to be always prepared for the coming of Christ. In each of these senses, and in others similar to these, we shall see it illustrated hereafter, in different para-

bles ; but that which is at the bottom of them all, is the Gospel dispensation, *primarily*, considered as a state of probation in this life, conducting, *secondarily*, to the enjoyment of a kingdom of heaven, considered as a state of retribution in another life.

CHAPTER XI.

On the method observed in treating of the Parables.

THE method, which I have observed, in treating of each parable, as far as it was practicable, is this: first, I have explained the circumstances of the material history; secondly, I have ascertained its moral; thirdly, I have shewn its application, or its interpretation.

The explanation of the material structure of each parabolic history seemed obviously necessary, before we could proceed to consider its use in any other respect. The analogies which must be applied in the case of a moral example, and the facts which must be interpreted in that of a prophetic allegory, both suppose the circumstances of the narrative to be previously well understood. These circumstances constitute the data of our practical reasonings in the one case, and the symbolical language of our real histories, which is to be translated and explained, in the other.

Besides, as each of these parabolic narratives, whatever may be its ulterior use and purpose, has an essence and composition of its own, it may require explanation, either to shew the connexion of its parts, or to clear up and illustrate its allusions, which being derived from ancient sources are not uniformly intelligible to modern readers. I have made a point therefore, of endeavouring to explain all the material circumstances of each parable, or at least as much of them as was practicable, before I attempted any thing else: and should it

even appear to some persons, that these preliminary expositions are perhaps too minute and particular, my excuse must be, that I have rendered them so on purpose; being persuaded that it was better to explain too much than too little, and the necessities of different readers requiring different degrees of information, that I was most likely to consult the advantage of all, by explaining every thing.

With respect to the allegorical parables, indeed, these preliminary explanations, minute, circumstantial, and even superfluous as they may seem, will still be found available in the interpretation. I would have the reader therefore, to suspend his judgment upon what is premised at the outset of such parables, until he sees what use and application can ultimately be made of it. It is a characteristic of this class of parables, that under a very simple exterior they convey very recondite truths. The material history is so plain, that he who runneth seems competent to read it; but its secret meaning is often such as to exercise the deepest sagacity and penetration.

With regard to the second point; I have taken it for granted that each of the parables possesses some moral of its own, and that none of them can properly possess more than one. It seemed to me equally absurd to suppose that any of these narratives had no use or meaning at all, and had more uses or meanings than one: that a single, entire, and regular history of any kind, should lead to no proper specific and natural result, and that it should lead to more such results than one.

I have taken it for granted also, that as this one moral of one history must reside in, and be de-

duced from, the history itself, so it must not reside in, nor be deduced from *parts* of the history, but simply and solely from the whole. It is absurd to imagine that any integral part of an entire and regular narrative is meant to be idle or superfluous; and if no part is meant to be idle or superfluous, that all the parts do not or ought not to bear upon some one common result. Whatever, then, was the point, to which the material circumstances, considered in their relative connexion and dependency, appeared to converge; whatever turned out to be the joint effect of them all—the upshot and conclusion of the train and concatenation of incidents, pursued regularly forwards from the point where it began, to the point where it ended; in that result, I have taken it for granted that the moral of the parable and its circumstances was concentrated; on that point I have concluded the whole material structure to hinge, and the discovery of such a result to be the discovery of the final end, intended by the entire account.

With regard to the third point; the discovery of the proper moral of the parabolic history was directly subservient to its application, as a moral example, and to its interpretation, as a prophetic allegory. Between the nature of the process in either of these cases respectively, it is requisite to draw some distinction; for though one who interprets a parabolic allegory, may be said to apply it, yet he who applies a parabolic example, cannot be said to interpret it. An application, properly so called, can be made only of a moral history; and there can be an interpretation, with the same propriety, only of a prophetic allegory. The principle of analogy, or the common method of the argument *a pari*, must

be our guide in the former process ; the possession of a key or a clue, which will decypher or unravel a given series of synbolical facts, is necessary to the latter. The application of a moral example to parallel cases might not be impossible, even were those cases not previously pointed out ; much more, when the example is proposed along with the case which it is intended to illustrate. But the interpretation of an allegory, where the interpreter is left solely to conjecture, must always be a difficult, and under some circumstances, might be an impossible task.

It is true that when we are possessed of the key, we may solve an allegory, with as much facility as we can appropriate an example ; but the difficulty is to find out the key. Its own key will open the most intricate lock ; but as there is only one key that can stand in this relation to the lock, we may try an infinite variety of others without success. If the end of the thread is put into our hands, we may unravel the most tangled skein ; but if the skein is offered without the clue, a very simple roll of thread may become as perplexing as the Gordian knot.

In interpreting the allegorical parables, the model which I have endeavoured to follow, in every instance, is that which our Saviour himself has established, in one authentic specimen of the same kind of explanation. As each of the three evangelists has related the first of his parables, so have they each related the interpretation which he gave of it ; and as we are justified in considering that first of the number to be a sample or specimen of the rest of its kind, so are we, perhaps, in regarding its recorded interpretation, as a pattern or model of

all future explanations, which should be similarly attempted of the rest. No interpretation of any of the parables is related by each of the evangelists, but this one; and no interpretation, recorded by any of their number, ever went so minutely into particulars, and consequently is, on all accounts, so proper to be the standard of parabolic interpretation, as this one.

Let us compare the details of this explanation, with the circumstances of the allegory which it explains; if we would see throughout the proofs of the most minute, circumstantial, and individual agreement, between the material facts of the fictitious history, and the counterpart, which answers to them, in the real.

The sower, then, was declared to be some preacher, and the seed to be his word: the act of the sower, in going forth to sow, was the act of that preacher in going forth to preach: the dissemination of the seed by the one, was the dissemination of the word by the other. The ground on which the seed was sown, was the hearers among whom the word was preached: the physical qualities of the ground were the moral qualities of the hearers: the various differences of situation in the soil were the various distinctions of dispositions in the hearers. The different fortunes of the same seed, as it fell upon one of these situations or another, was the various success of the same word, as it was addressed to hearers of one of those dispositions or of another. The situation by the way side, into which the seed could not even penetrate, was stubbornness of heart in the hearers, on which the word could produce no effect: the birds which devoured the seed in that

situation, answered to the Devil, who snatches away the word from hearts of such a temper. Shallow-ness of soil in the situation on the rock was temporariness of faith in another class of hearers: the heat of the sun was persecution for the word's sake: defect of moisture in the ground was want of principle in the believer: the withering away and destruction of the blade were the loss and extinction of the former profession. The thorns and briars in another situation were the cares of life, the deceivableness of riches, the allurements and seductions of pleasure in general, with another class of hearers: the choking of the seed, produced by the former, was the distraction of affection, the gradual stifling of the word, produced in the hearers by the latter. Goodness of soil in another situation was honesty of heart, and goodness of disposition, in another class of hearers: the fruitfulness of the seed in the former, was the efficiency of the word with the latter: the degrees of production in the one, were the degrees of proficiency in the fruits of holiness in the other. The parallel might be extended still further, but that we should anticipate what will more properly come hereafter.

A scheme of interpretation in any instance, accommodated to a model like this, ought to be adequate to its purpose, at least; and if it does not explain more, it should not explain less, than is actually given for explanation, or contained in the material history. These complete interpretations carry with them the evidence of their own truth. Every allegory, which is really such, must admit of being interpreted: and every interpretation, which is really the true, must be complete, not partial. If it

is a right definition of the key of a given allegory, that it is something which will explain every part of it; we may convert the proposition, and say, that what will explain every part of a given allegory, is its key.

Nothing, indeed, can be more loose and indefinite, than such expositions of many of the parables as have been proposed, at various times, by different commentators. Nor ought we to be surprised at this; since in a case of this kind, unless they had begun right, it was impossible that they should have proceeded, or ended right. Under all circumstances, truth is uniform, and error is multiform; especially in the explanation of the scripture allegories, in which while there is but one way which will lead aright, there are innumerable ways that will lead astray.

In defence, however, of the inadequacy of such explanations, much is said about not straining analogies, nor seeking to find a meaning in every thing; that all parts of the same history are not of equal importance; that many things are merely ornamental and adscititious, and may be passed over without detriment to the general sense and effect. I am no advocate for straining analogies, nor explaining any thing unnecessarily: but I do not call a scheme of interpretation, which aims at being complete without being forced, a violation of analogies: and if an interpretation can be found, which will go to the length of solving a whole history, it is to be preferred to one which will go only to the extent of a part. Still less am I inclined to consider any portion of a given history merely ornamental—in other words, practically idle and superfluous—for which an actual use can be assigned, upon any prin-

ciple of interpretation, which is easy and probable, and sufficient to account for its introduction into the narrative, to elucidate its connexion with the rest of the history, and to establish the fact of its subserviency to the general moral.

And this is the reason more especially, that the opinions of such expositors, as have mistaken certain of the allegorical for merely moral parables, and have explained them accordingly, carry their refutation along with them. They invariably paralyse and render nugatory some important member of an entire account ; the existence of which it is impossible to deny, and the necessity of which to the moral effect of the whole, it is impossible to dispense with.

The discovery of some leading, principal, and fundamental idea in the structure of an history, where all the parts hang together, and the series of consequences, circumstantially developed, derives its dependence and connexion—its tone and colouring, from this one particular, must be the discovery of something like a clue to the whole ; the use of which will conduct step by step to its entire elucidation. The reader will hereafter meet with instances of the application of this principle to the unravelment of the texture of a given allegory. Moreover, when the same image enters as a basis or groundwork into more than one parable, the discovery of its meaning in a former instance, may justly be considered available to the determination of its use in a later.

It is observable, however, as the result of the particular comparison of all the parables, that no two of them, even those that were least consecutive, that is, were delivered at the greatest distance of time

asunder, are strictly tautological, or directed to exactly the same moral : and that consecutive parables, or those which were delivered at the same time and place, even while relating to the same subject in general, as a preceding parable, enlarge, expand, and dignify its moral, by rendering it more complex and mysterious. There is a difference also in the allegorical parables, as addressed to the people, and to the disciples of our Lord, respectively ; which admirably illustrates the propriety of his teaching in the choice of his matter, and its adaptation to the kinds of his hearers, with a perfect identity as to its mode.

The six last of the parables, which were first delivered, are manifestly different from the two which preceded them, and from others of the same class, which followed in the course of time ; not so much, however, in their respective subject matter, as in the length and circumstantiality of their details. There is nothing like regularity of narrative in them ; and their occurrence in any number, seems to have been peculiar to this first occasion. Each of them, taken by itself, is a perfect and integral representation of some one feature in the same complex idea of the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation : but it consists of a few expressive strokes, and is not drawn out at length, but dispatched in a summary manner. We may compare them to miniature likenesses, in contradistinction to full length portraits. They succeed each other like the shiftings of a moveable scene ; each disclosing the same object of contemplation, but always in some new point of view. They may be called, therefore, minor parables, or simple allegorical comparisons ; which we can oppose to nothing in the department of the moral, more justly,

than to those short and familiar illustrations from parallel cases, which occur so frequently in our Lord's discourses, and are regular instances of the argument *a pari*, directly applied.

Between the parœmia of St. John, and the parable of the other evangelists, there is this difference, that though they are each of them allegorical, and each of them prophetic alike, the former has a personal relation to Jesus Christ, which the latter has not: a personal relation too, which concerns him as the Messiah of the Jews, and as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. Thus, though both may refer to facts, and facts of a mysterious and recondite kind, the parœmia of St. John relates to facts more immediately connected with the leading and characteristic doctrines of the Gospel, than the parables of the other evangelists.

For example, the parable of the wicked husbandmen, recorded by each of the three, contains a plain representation of the fact of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, in his capacity of the Heir of the vineyard, or Son of the owner; but discloses nothing of the final end of that fact, or why he was to die and suffer. But the allegory of the good Shepherd, related by St. John, describes the good Shepherd not only by other characteristics, which agree solely to the Messiah, and to Jesus Christ, but also as the Saviour of his sheep by the sacrifice of himself: for it represents him as the good Shepherd on that account more particularly, because he should lay down his life for the sheep.

Upon the beauties of the parables of either kind, considered merely as compositions, and as judged of by the ordinary rules of criticism, it would be easy

to expatiate; for they abound in beauties, which cannot fail to recommend them to any reader of taste. An elegance which charms by its artlessness, and a simplicity which never offends by negligence, are characteristics of them all. The dramatic mode of narration, by which so much is carried on in the words of the agents, and so little in the person of the narrator, (a mode peculiar to ancient historical simplicity, and especially to the simplicity of the Old Testament; tempered, however, with somewhat of the refinement of our Lord's own age,) is the predominant mode throughout: and what is inseparable from this form of narration in particular, it communicates to the story in each instance, a peculiar air of nature and truth, a lively and picturesque effect, like that of real action personified. Admirable strokes of description; graphic delineations of character; beautiful turns of expression; natural sentiments delivered in appropriate language; disclosures of the candour, the delicacy, the benevolence, which must have been habitual to the mind which conceived and expressed such conceptions; are visible in almost every parable. Some of the histories therein recorded, are exquisitely pathetic in themselves, most closely and regularly connected in their circumstances, and related in so simple and touching a manner, that they cannot be read nor heard without emotion. On this subject, however, we must not indulge too far at present, that the reader may not be prematurely deprived of the pleasure and advantage, which I hope will be derived from the contemplation of the beauties of the parables hereafter.

CHAPTER XII. PART I.

On the Millennium, and the Scriptural Testimonies to the Doctrine of it.

IN questions relating to the truth or falsehood of disputed matters of fact, it is observed by Aristotle in his treatise on the art of rhetoric, that the incredibility of an event may sometimes be advanced as a presumptive argument of its truth^a. The fact may be too extraordinary to be invented, the supposition of it too improbable to be preconceived; if there were no foundation for either. It is not usual to assert any thing as fact, which is not known to be so, or not considered capable of being so; falsehood would not impose on the understanding for a moment, unless by the appearance of truth; no matter of fact could be believed to be probable, which was not even possible, nor real, which was not even probable. If then a fact is asserted, which if true, would be the most extraordinary of all events, if a supposition is entertained which, of all preconceivable opinions, would be the least likely to occur to the mind of itself; it is a natural inference that the fact is asserted because it is true, the supposition is entertained because it could not be otherwise.

The principle on which this observation is founded, has been applied to illustrate the divine original of some of the most peculiar doctrines of Christianity: which though proposed as articles of faith, in revealing which the instruments were men, and in

^a II. xxiii. 22.

receiving and professing which the recipients and professors were men—yet as transcending the capacity of the human understanding to comprehend, it may reasonably be concluded, were too sublime and mysterious, for the human imagination to have conceived. That they are taught, therefore, in the books of the New Testament, plainly in the statement, however obscurely in the sense; that they are enjoined and required to be professed as articles of our faith, whether intelligible to our reason or not—is implicitly an argument, that they could not have been conceived by the unassisted human intellect; and therefore that the matter or substance of such truths was *revealed*.

The same kind of observation has been applied to the characteristic moral doctrines of the Gospel; which being so exquisitely pure and perfect—so much beyond what we can either attain to of ourselves in practice, or should have considered of ourselves the legitimate measure of our attainment in theory—yet being proposed as the positive standard of perfection, as what we must aspire at and endeavour to come up to, whether we can reach it or not; argue in like manner, that the first conception of a pattern of excellence so exalted and faultless, was no idea of the mere human imagination, but a direct transcript from infinite purity and perfection.

That principle of reasoning, which the writers on the evidences of Christianity, have thus applied to its most characteristic doctrines and precepts, may be rendered not less available in confirming, *a priori*, the claims to credibility, which the advocates of what is called the MILLENNIUM, advance in behalf of their peculiar doctrine and expectation.

We may define this doctrine and expectation generally, as the belief of a second personal advent or return of our Lord Jesus Christ, sometime before the end of the present state of things on the earth; a resurrection of a part of the dead in the body, concurrently with that return; the establishment of a kingdom, for a certain length of time, upon earth, of which Jesus Christ will be the sovereign head, and the good and holy men, who lived under the Mosaic dispensation before the Gospel æra, or have lived under the Christian, since, whether previously raised to life, or found alive in the flesh, at the time of the return, will be the subjects, and in some manner or other admitted to a share of its privileges.

This, I say, is what is meant by the doctrine of the millennium in general: the fact of a return of Jesus Christ in person, before the end of the world; of a first or particular resurrection of the dead; of a reign of Christ, with all saints, on the earth: and all this, before the present state of things is at an end, and before time and sense, whose proper period of being is commensurate with the duration of the present state of things, have given place to spirit and eternity in heaven.

The statement of such a doctrine and such an expectation as this, is quite enough to shew that they are of a very extraordinary character; and not at all likely *a priori*, to have entered into the human imagination, without some suggestion or other from without. Nor is the antecedent improbability of the doctrine in general diminished by the particular circumstances, which are associated with the expectation of the facts themselves, as the attributes or accidents of what is expected: viz. that the kingdom

to be established, will be established in Judæa; that its appointed duration will be one thousand years; that during its continuance there will be neither physical nor moral evil; that rewards, distinctions, or privileges, will be awarded in it, proportioned to the degrees of goodness or desert, which those, who are permitted to partake of it, have previously exemplified in the flesh; and the like.

It will readily be acknowledged that the representation of a future scheme of things like this, is utterly dissimilar to any thing that we see in existence at present, or remember to have seen or heard of, as ever in existence before: and should it come to be realized on the earth, that it will no more resemble the state of things there at present, or any state of things in the world, of which human memory has perpetuated the recollection, than the golden age of the poets, or those pictures of primeval innocence and happiness, which our imaginations might perhaps delineate, as once appointed to be the constitution of paradise, resemble the actual scenes of sin, of misery, of physical and moral evil, in the midst of which human existence, so far as we can trace back its history, is known to have always been transacted.

Still, the doctrine of the millennium is not like that of the Trinity in Unity, or of any such article of faith as however plainly inculcated, must yet be incomprehensible, and therefore either implicitly to be received, or absolutely to be rejected. It is, after all, the doctrine of a *fact*; which however remarkable in itself, is not beyond the bounds of our comprehension; and therefore, though proposed as an article of future expectation, it may still be al-

lowed to be abstractedly a possible event. Yet that even this event is too extraordinary, *per se*, too unlike any thing that man ever saw, or heard of, or would consider probable to be at any time witnessed upon this earth, to have been of mere human invention, and yet to be seriously proposed and seriously believed, must be admitted. The most ardent and enthusiastic imagination could scarcely have conceived an idea of such a scheme and dispensation of things, even in a vision; much less have not only conceived, but deliberately propounded the ideal delusions of its own dreams and reveries, as no fairy picture, nor shadowy delineation of a mere airy nothing, but the bodily substantial outline of a sober, though future, reality—the present anticipation of an actual matter of fact to come, the fulfilment of which in due time should not only confirm and verify, but infinitely transcend the self-created images of the fancy; eclipsing every effort of invention to describe such a state beforehand, by the more than correspondency of the simple truth, and casting into the shade the utmost graces and embellishments of the copy, by the inimitable beauties of the original. The mere conception, perhaps, of a state of innocence and of corresponding happiness upon earth, is possible; but what degree of human credulity, with no better assurance than its own glowing conceptions of such a state, was ever persuaded to expect it? The futurity, however, not merely of such a state in general, but of such a state as qualified and characterised by the circumstances of distinction which we have mentioned, has been contemplated, at all ages of the church, under the general expectation of a millennium, by many who were neither fools nor

visionaries, but sober and rational Christians; and in the belief of that futurity they have both lived and died.

As far then as the antecedent improbability of a particular doctrine, which is nevertheless proposed as a grave and serious truth, can give it a claim to attention, the doctrine of the millennium is justly entitled to consideration, from the nature of the doctrine itself. It is but reasonable that we should earnestly inquire, what inducement multitudes of good and pious men had in former times, and what inducement serious and reflecting Christians may still have, to acquiesce in the belief of so extraordinary an article of their faith, as the reality of the millennium; an expectation, which at first sight resembles the dream of a distempered imagination—much more than the sober anticipation of a rational conviction, sometime to be fulfilled by the event.

The expectation of a return of Jesus Christ in person, before the consummation of all things, might seem, indeed, to be only a natural consequence of the fact of his departure, and of the order and course of things which have since gone on. But a return of Christ in person, not to be followed by the consummation of all things, but for a specific purpose, in the transaction of an intermediate œconomy, was nothing that could be naturally collected from the fact of his temporary departure, or from the final end of that scheme of religious discipline, which has since subsisted. And that the return of Jesus Christ in person might be preliminary to the resurrection of the dead, as that might be to the general judgment—was an expectation which, whether antecedently to be collected on other grounds, or not, was

yet antecedently more likely to be generally received and entertained, than a belief that the resurrection to follow on his return, should take place at twice, and the judgment, consequent upon it, not be universal but partial—that some of the dead should be raised to life on an earlier occasion, and the rest, on a later; and some be already in possession of their everlasting reward, or already assured of their final favour and acceptance with their Judge, ere judgment itself had begun upon the rest.

Into the fact of the prevalency of the doctrine in former times, as far as the proof of its truth depends upon the historical testimony to its antiquity, and to the extent of its diffusion in the church of Christ, it shall be our business to inquire hereafter. At present I shall merely observe, that my reason for entering on the discussion of the doctrine at all, is its connexion with the proper business of this work, the exposition of the parables of our Saviour.

But, though it is necessary that something should be said of this connexion, in general, to justify the introduction of the present topic into the body of the work, still it would obviously be improper for me to enter minutely into particulars; and with that view to anticipate the examination of those parables, whose consideration ought to be reserved for their own time and place. I shall explain this connexion, then, only in the most general terms; and if I seem to assert any thing of a questionable nature, without supplying the necessary proofs, the reader will give me credit for doing so, merely because the proper time and place for the production of such proofs are not yet come.

In the preceding part, then, of the General Intro-

duction, we spoke of the constitution of the church at present, and of its constitution sometime to come hereafter; and of an œconomy of discipline and probation, adapted to its constitution at present, preparatory to an œconomy of reward and retribution, adapted to its constitution hereafter. There are a variety of parables of the allegorical kind, which relate to both these things, exemplifying the process of an œconomy of probation on the one hand, and of an œconomy of retribution, arising out of it, on the other; the former, referable to a matter of fact which holds good of the state of the church at present, and the latter to one, which may be equally true of some state or condition of it, hereafter. These parables are, the parable of the tares; the parable of the drawnet or sagine; the parable of the servants left in waiting for their master; the parable of the servant left instead of his master; the parable of the great supper; the parable of the nobleman or the pounds; the parable of the wedding garment; the parable of the virgins; the parable of the talents: and others, as it may hereafter appear, either wholly or partially, which I have not specified.

With respect, then, to the moral of all such parables, as exhibit this preparatory œconomy of probation, conducting regularly to a final œconomy of retribution, we have to choose between two alternatives: whether, as they begin in this life, but end in another, they find their consummation in the final termination of all things in heaven, or in some intermediate dispensation, which though posterior to the present life, is prior to the beginning of the state of things in heaven.

Were the decision of this question doubtful of the

rest of these parables, it would not be so of one of their number, that of the nobleman and his servants. Of this parable it is capable of proof, amounting almost to a demonstration, that it does not find its consummation in the state of things, which is to begin and proceed to all eternity in heaven, but in some other dispensation, which though later than the state of things in this life, is prior to that in heaven. As all these parables relate to a kindred subject, and by the community of structure in their composition indicate a community of tendency in their moral, what is shewn to be true of this one parable becomes true by implication of the rest.

The difference in fact between this one and the rest, does not consist in their not admitting of being referred to the same consummation as this, but simply in the circumstance, that the fact of this reference is not capable of being actually demonstrated of them, as it is of this. The millenary reign, with its œconomy of reward and retribution, will satisfactorily explain even the rest; but the millenary reign, with its œconomy, alone will competently explain that one: some other œconomy of reward and retribution, such as we commonly associate with the notion of a kingdom in heaven, might possibly explain the rest. I hope to shew, indeed, in the course of this very dissertation, that nothing will fully and adequately effect even this purpose, but the millenary œconomy itself.

When, then, we have to choose between that solution which will but imperfectly resolve a given problem, and never so as to leave no room for doubt or difficulty—and that which will minutely, circumstantially, and unanswerably supply the given explana-

tion; we cannot hesitate on which of the modes of solution to fix. I take it for granted, then, that all those allegorical parables, which represent an œconomy of probation of a certain kind, preparatory to, and followed by, an œconomy of retribution, critically adjusted to it, are to be referred to the state of things under the millenary dispensation, as far as regards this final œconomy of retribution, on the same principle that they are to be referred to the state of things at present established in the church on earth, as far as regards the previous œconomy of probation. So much for the connexion of the subject of the millennium with that of the exposition of the Gospel parables; which must be my apology to the reader for giving the discussion of this doctrine a place, among the topics treated of in the General Introduction to that exposition.

The method which I propose to follow, in the order and distribution of the subject, is first, to consider in detail those passages of the New Testament, which appear to me to furnish any countenance to the supposed truth and reasonableness of the doctrine in question.

Secondly, to examine such passages of the same, as may be fairly considered at first sight to militate against it.

Thirdly, to trace the historical evidence of the doctrine, from the earliest period in the annals of Christianity, up to which we have the means of mounting, down to the fourth or fifth century; lower than which I should think it unnecessary to bring its investigation.

Fourthly, to examine, with a view to refute, the most natural, obvious, or popular objections to the

doctrine, which have been, or may be, urged against it: and afterwards, to state some important uses to which the doctrine may be shewn to be subservient, and which might prepare us, *a priori*, to expect some such œconomy and dispensation, as that of the millennium, before the consummation of all things.

In the above distribution of the method of our inquiry, nothing is said of the consideration of any argument in favour of the same conclusions, which might be derived from the prophecies in the Old Testament. My reason for this omission is partly, that I must necessarily be as studious of brevity, on the present occasion, as is consistent with a proper regard to the importance of the subject; partly, because I consider the argument supplied by the prophecies in the New Testament, to be amply sufficient for the triumphant establishment of the belief in question; and therefore, that the further allegation of those of the Old Testament, however satisfactory as tending to shew the harmony both of the Old and of the New Testament, in their disclosures relating to a common topic, is not absolutely necessary to our purpose; that we may take it into account, or we may dispense with it, in either case equally *ex abundanti*. Perhaps, too, as there may be persons who would not think the argument from the testimony of the Old Testament satisfactory, without the support of the New; the best method of availing ourselves of the former is to call it in, from time to time, as an auxiliary evidence in confirmation of the latter. I shall not, therefore, insist on the argument derivable from the prophecies of the Old Testament, in support of the peculiar doctrines of the millennium, except *obiter* and *pro re nata*. These

prophecies, in fact, are so numerous, and so interspersed in every part of the Old Testament, that their complete circumstantial developement would furnish materials for a distinct work.

With regard to the passages of the New Testament, which I propose to consider in detail, the reader will no doubt give me leave to classify and arrange them, in any way that may be most convenient for my purpose: in order to which distribution of them, I shall first state *seriatim* a number of propositions, all intimately connected together, and embodying collectively what appears to me the substance of an orthodox millenarian's creed; and then proceed to subjoin the scriptural proofs of each. My ideas of this creed are collected from the opinions of the millenarians of ancient times, and not from those of the advocates of the doctrine in modern times. The former in many respects differ from the latter; and having to choose between them, I do not hesitate to prefer the former, believing them to be not simply the more ancient, but withal the more scriptural of the two.

The millenarian then, expects the following events; and as far as he can infer their connexion, in the following order; though that is not, in every instance, a point of paramount importance, or absolute certainty, on which room for the possibility of a different succession of particulars, may not be allowed to exist.

First, a personal reappearance of the prophet Elijah, before any second advent of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, a second advent of Jesus Christ in person, before his coming to judgment at the end of the world.

Thirdly, a conversion of the Jews to Christianity, collectively, and as a nation.

Fourthly, a resurrection of part of the dead, such as is called by way of distinction, the resurrection of the just.

Fifthly, the restitution of the kingdom to Israel, including the appearance and manifestation of the Messiah of the Jews, in the character of a temporal monarch.

Sixthly, a conformation of this kingdom to a state or condition of society, of which Christ will be the head, and faithful believers both Jews and Gentiles will be the members.

A distribution of rewards and dignities in it, proportioned to the respective merits or good deserts of the receivers.

A resulting state of things, which though transacted upon earth, and adapted to the nature and conditions of a human society as such, leaves nothing to be desired for its perfection and happiness.

Let us now proceed to inquire on what scriptural foundation the sober-minded millennarian rests his belief in these articles of his creed: and first, with regard to a personal reappearance of the prophet Elijah, before any second advent of Jesus Christ.

Matt. xvii. 10, 11. "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then do the scribes say that Elias must come first? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias indeed doth come first, and shall restore all things."

Mark ix. 11, 12. "And they asked him, saying, Why do the scribes say that Elias must come first? And he answered and said unto them,

“ Elias indeed, having come first, doth restore all “ things.”

These words are part of the conversation, which passed between our Saviour, and the three disciples who had witnessed the event of his transfiguration, as they were descending from the mountain where it happened, the day after the night of that event ^b.

The immediate cause of the question, and what no doubt suggested even the form of the words in which it was put, according to St. Matthew, (*why then,*) was the fact that Elijah had just been seen, for the first time; (*viz.* at the transfiguration, along with Moses;) though the scribes had taught the people to expect to see him, before the appearance of the Messiah, and though the ministry of Jesus Christ himself, whom the apostles certainly believed to be the Messiah, had been going on now two years, and nearly six months.

That the scribes or teachers of the people themselves entertained this expectation of an appearance of Elijah, and taught the people to entertain it too, appears from the question put to John the Baptist by the deputation from the Sanhedrim, the day before our Lord's return to Bethabara from the scene of the temptation, Art thou Elijah ^c? and from one of the opinions, mentioned as current concerning our Lord himself, after his fame had been noised abroad, so as to reach the ears of Herod the tetrarch, that he also was Elijah ^d. The same opinion continued to be entertained of him by some, to the end of his

^b Harm. P. iv. 10, 11. ^c Harm. P. ii. 8. ^d Mark vi. 15.
Luke ix. 8. Harm. P. iii. 27.

ministry; and we see proof that Elijah was still expected to appear, at the time of the crucifixion ^e.

The continuance of the same expectation of a personal reappearance of Elijah, before the manifestation of the Christ; and even what specific purpose the fact of that appearance was expected to serve, in determining the person, the character, or the functions of the Christ, are plainly asserted by Trypho the Jew, in his Dialogue with Justin Martyr, as articles of his own belief, and of that of his countrymen ^f. The time of this dialogue was the latter end of the reign of Hadrian, or the beginning of that of Antoninus Pius: about A. D. 136.

The foundation of this belief is doubtless to be traced to Malachi iv. 5, 6: the only passage of the Old Testament, which predicts an appearance of Elijah as the precursor of the Messiah, by name; though there are others, which predict some precursor or harbinger of the Messiah, but without a name ^g.

“ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

That the scribes then taught, and that the people believed in, the futurity of an actual personal reappearance of Elijah, before the advent of the Messiah, and that they had scriptural authority for this ex-

^e Matt. xxvii. 47—49: Mark xv. 35, 36: Harm. P. iv. 101. Cf. Matt. xvi. 14: Mark viii. 28: Luke ix. 19: Harm. P. iv. 8.

^f Dialog. 153. 26—34. 235. 15—236. 5.

^g Malachi iii. 1: Isaiah xl. 3. 4. 5. 9

pectation, in the language of one at least of the prophets, are certain truths. It was natural therefore for the disciples to ask their Master, why the scribes had taught them all along to expect this appearance of Elijah, before his own; who yet had appeared first, if he could be considered to have appeared at all, so long after his own manifestation, at the recent event of the transfiguration?

And in answer to this inquiry, were there no foundation in truth for the doctrine and expectation in question, we should just as naturally suppose our Lord would not have failed to say so; would have told the inquirers, that the scribes had no reason to form such an expectation, and to teach such a doctrine; and therefore that it was no wonder they had been proved false teachers by the event.

But our Saviour says no such thing. He confirms the truth of the expectation of a coming of Elijah in general; and he declares what were to be the purpose and effect of his coming in general; both, in such terms as to imply that his coming, and the effect to be produced by it, were alike still future, and not yet past: "Elias indeed doth come first, and shall restore all things:" (*Ἡλίας μὲν ἔρχεται πρῶτον, καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει πάντα:*) in the language of which proposition St. Mark agrees with St. Matthew, only that he uses the present tense of the verb, instead of the future: "doth restore," instead of "shall restore."

It is the peculiarity of the language in question, as predicting some future event, to be connected with the appearance of Elijah beforehand, as a consequent is with an antecedent, or an effect with a cause; that justifies us in contending it cannot with

any propriety be construed to refer to some past event, which, whether connected with an appearance of Elijah in any sense, or not, had nevertheless already taken place. It justifies us therefore in contending that the effect, supposed to be consecutive on the appearance of Elijah, was nothing which could have transpired and been executed already, in consequence of the appearance of John the Baptist. It would not indeed have been consistent with propriety of language in any case, had our Saviour spoken of that coming as still *first* or *prior*, in reference to what had long since taken place, his own manifestation also, in his proper time and order, after that of his precursor; but it would be still more inconsistent with it, to have spoken of the effect, to follow upon the coming of Elijah, as something still future, when the coming itself, which was to produce it, had long since taken place, and all the effect ever contemplated or designed by it, had long since been brought to pass. Would not this have been the same thing as saying, that the effect should be produced, after the cause which was to produce it, should long before have ceased to act?

If, then, while our Saviour admits the truth of the popular doctrine of some appearance of Elijah before that of the Christ, he recognises, at the same time a future matter of fact, to which that appearance was to be subservient; he cannot be understood to refer to an appearance of Elijah, in any sense, which had already preceded his own; much less to any event, as a consequence of that, which had already resulted from it. If so, he refers to some *future* appearance of Elijah, and to some *future* effect, the consequence of it; both, as prior and pre-

liminary to some advent of the Messiah, and therefore a second advent; for one, and consequently a first, had already taken place.

Now as a second advent of the Messiah is naturally opposed to a first, so is a harbinger of a second advent as naturally to one of a first: and if every advent of the Messiah must have its harbinger, and that harbinger must be Elijah in some sense or other, then, if the harbinger of the second is the literal Elijah, the harbinger of the first, on the principle of correlatives, could not be Elijah in person, but might be so in figure. John the Baptist was the harbinger of the first advent of the Messiah; and therefore John the Baptist was Elijah in figure, and might be spoken of as such.

Accordingly he is so spoken of by the angel, who announced the futurity of his birth to his father Zacharias. “For he shall be great before the Lord; and wine and strong drink he may not drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, (*or* he shall be filled with a holy spirit,) yet from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in Elias his spirit and power, to restore unto children the hearts of fathers, and disobedient ones to the wisdom (the way of thinking) of just, to make ready for the Lord a prepared peopleⁱ.”

By quoting the words, which Malachi had used in describing the effect to be produced by the ministry of Elijah, before the day of the Lord, the angel clearly intimates that the office, so to be fulfilled by the mission of Elijah, would be similarly discharged

ⁱ Luke i. 15—17. Harm. P. i. 2.

by the ministry of John; but by premising that John should perform this part, in the spirit and power of Elijah, not in his person, he plainly distinguishes between the agents, even while he affirms the similarity of the thing to be done by them; Elijah in power and spirit is evidently opposed to Elijah in power and person. Any one, who discharged an office resembling Elijah's, might be called Elijah in spirit; Elijah himself only could be called Elijah in person. It cannot be inferred, then, from the testimony of the angel, that the prophecy of Malachi was intended exclusively of John: it might indeed be applied to him as a type of Elijah, as answering to Elijah in spirit; but that it was always designed to be so applied, that it had no respect to any appearance of Elijah in person, does not follow from the use that is made of it by the angel Gabriel.

It is usual, indeed, to consider Elijah as a type of John the Baptist, and to explain the similarity of their characters on that principle: and I am willing to admit that in some parts of the personal history of the two, and some circumstances of their personal character, the historical relation between them may seem actually to hold good. It is, however, with respect to accidental circumstances, in which the essence of their character no wise consists: and with regard to that one common characteristic distinction, in which, more than any thing else, are involved the truth and propriety of the ministerial relation of each to the Messiah, viz. that they should go before the face of the Lord, to produce such and such effects, preparatory to his own appearance; the reverse of the usual explanation appears to me to be the more

correct, and the very thing implied by the language of the angel in reference to both ; viz. that John the Baptist was a type of Elijah, and not Elijah a type of John the Baptist. John did that on his appearance, first, which Elijah was also to do, on his, next ; and because their personal office was so far a common one, the description of it left by Malachi in reference to Elijah, was so far applicable to John. But John would not be called Elijah in spirit, except as opposed to Elijah in person ; nor would it be said that he should go before as Elijah in spirit, if it were not supposed that Elijah himself should some time go before in person.

Nor can it be objected, that the words of the angel perhaps mean, that John should go before on this occasion as Elijah in spirit, just as Elijah had gone before on some former occasion, in his own person. For, on what occasion, I would ask, was that ? and who was the Lord that followed after Elijah in his own person, on that occasion, as Jesus followed upon John the Baptist, as upon Elijah in spirit, on this occasion ?

It is certain that the prediction of Malachi promised apparently an appearance of Elijah in person : it is not less certain that the Jews, construing it literally, expected Elijah in person. Consequently, they were not prepared to receive an assurance that the appearance of any one, who answered merely to Elijah in spirit, was the appearance of the Elijah whom they expected. Such an assurance they received from our Lord concerning John the Baptist, mixed, however, with a significant intimation that he did not suppose they would readily admit it. It occurs in the course of the reflections which he ad-

dressed to the people, after the arrival of the celebrated message of John: "And if ye are willing to receive it, (that is, to believe it,) he himself is Elias who is about to come:" (Καὶ εἰ θέλετε δεῖξασθαι, αὐτός ἐστιν Ἡλίας ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι^k.)

Here, also, it is admitted that some Elijah was to come; and while it is further asserted, that if they would receive it, if they would persuade themselves to think so, John himself was Elijah in question; it would be a very unfair inference from this admission, that no other person was contemplated by our Saviour, no other in his opinion was to be expected in the character of Elijah, but John. It is not a correct version of the words, to render them, "This is that Elijah, which was for to come:" for that would make them imply that no one else was to come. It is more correct to render them, "He himself is Elijah, who is about to come." Their force is properly, "He himself is an Elijah, who is about to come." For, though Elijah is strictly a proper name, yet as defined by (ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι) "He who is about to come," it becomes equivalent to an appellative; and may describe a class of persons, provided they agree in that one particular, of being persons *about to come*, for such and such an end and purpose.

What then was the difficulty, which it is implied by our Saviour's language, the Jews would feel in assenting to the assurance that John was an Elijah, as destined to come. It is enough to reply, that they expected Elijah in person, and therefore would not readily believe that a different individual could, in any sense, be he; that they were still less pre-

^k Matt. xi. 14. Harm. P. iii. 9.

pared to believe this of such an individual as John the Baptist, whom they had long before determined to reject, and who had been now nearly eighteen months in prison; that they could not believe John to be the expected Elijah, who was to precede, without also believing that Jesus was the expected Lord or Messiah, who was to follow: and this last was a point which at no time in our Saviour's ministry, and particularly after his first year was over, were they prepared generally to concede.

And hence it furnishes no ground of objection to the truth of the expectation of an appearance of Elijah as still to come, that in this very conversation with the disciples, at the time of the descent from the mountain of transfiguration, after answering their question, as we have seen, our Lord subjoined: "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they have known him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they have listed¹:" which the disciples, it is added, immediately understood to be meant of John the Baptist. There is no inconsistency between this statement, that Elijah was come already, and the other, just before, that Elijah should still first come—if one is meant of the spiritual, and the other, of the literal, Elijah; the one of John the Baptist, as a type of Elijah, in his proper character of the precursor of the Messiah, the other of Elijah, as the antitype of the Baptist, in precisely the same relation.

Having thus considered all the texts in the New Testament, except the book of Revelation, which relate to the coming of Elijah, I shall conclude by

¹ Matt. xvii. 12. Cf. Mark ix. 13. Harm. *loc. cit.*

observing, that the belief in the futurity of this coming was generally received among the fathers; who are unanimous also in considering one of the two witnesses, mentioned in the book of Revelation^m, to be meant of Elijah. Proofs of both these assertions will be produced hereafter.

With regard to the second of our propositions; a second advent of Jesus Christ in person, before his coming to judgment at the end of the world: in the first place it may be observed that the arguments, which tend to establish the belief of an appearance of Elijah in person, *first*, contribute to establish the certainty of an appearance of the Christ in person, also, *afterwards*. For these things are connected as antecedent and consequent, or as cause and effect: Elijah is not to go before, unless some one else is to follow after; and Elijah must go before, because that other person is to follow after. It was so, in the case of the precession of Elijah in spirit; and it will be so, in the case of the precession of Elijah in person: the Lord God, in the person of our Saviour, Christ, followed actually after the spiritual Elijah; and the same Lord God, in the person of the same Saviour, Jesus Christ, must follow actually after the real Elijah.

It may appear, indeed, superfluous to prove the doctrine of a second advent of Jesus Christ, some time or other: for what Christian is there, who does not believe in it, and is not as firmly persuaded that his Lord and Master will in due time return to judge the world, as that he once came into it to save it, and having accomplished that object, departed again to

^m Rev. xi. 3, 4, 7, &c.

heaven by his ascension? A return of Jesus Christ in person, however, to the general judgment, and one, preparatory to any other œconomy, not to be transacted without his presence again on earth, are very different things. The expectation of the former is common to all Christians, the opponents as well as the advocates of the millennium; but the belief in the latter is peculiar to its advocates.

Now, that we may admit for a moment the equal truth of each of these expectations—as they are both alike still future, and both alike matter of implicit faith, and always must have been; we might naturally look to find repeated allusions to each of them in scripture, yet not always so determinate as to shew which of them in particular was meant. Such allusions do, indeed, occur; but frequently in the most general terms, so as to leave it doubtful of what coming of Christ they are to be understood. But even under such circumstances, if there are to be both a first and a second event of the same kind in general, reason is that indefinite allusions to the fact of such an event, not otherwise explained or specified, should be referred to the *first* instance of the kind to which they will apply; and in some cases this reference is not only *a priori* just and reasonable, but even necessary, and such as the nature of the case seems peremptorily to require.

For example; in St. John's account of what passed at the sea of Galilee, upon the last appearance of Jesus to the disciples, after his resurrection, which he mentionsⁿ, when we read that Peter put this question, concerning (as it is commonly supposed)

ⁿ Chap. xxi. 1—24. Harm. P. v. 13.

St. John himself, “ Lord, and what of this *man* ?” and that Jesus answered, “ If I will that he tarry, “ until I come, what *is it* to thee ?” we see that there is a distinct allusion to some coming or advent of Jesus himself in person, (which must therefore be a return,) as hereafter to take place ; but what return, and when, is left indefinite.

When we read, however, in the next place, St. John’s account of an expectation concerning himself, which became current among the brethren in consequence of the words of Jesus, that he was not to die, but to be kept alive until the time of the coming of Christ in question ; then, if there be cause to expect a double advent of Christ, at different times and for different purposes respectively ; surely the coming referred to in this expectation concerning St. John, ought in all reason to be understood of the first, and not of the last. If a coming of Christ again before the end or consummation of all things, was upon other grounds, to be expected, we can conceive it possible that a notion, founded upon the *prima facie* construction of the words of Jesus to Peter, might get abroad in the church, that St. John should survive to witness this coming ; but not, if no coming was known or expected, except what should immediately be followed by the end of the world. The end of the world, for aught that the church knew to the contrary, might still be indefinitely remote : but some return of Christ in person, we learn from a variety of intimations both in scripture, and out of scripture, at a very early period of the Gospel history was currently believed to be close at hand ; and that too, after the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as before it.

With this expectation generally diffused, it might be no extravagant opinion that St. John perhaps was specially to be kept alive until the fulfilment of the event expected; for that might be to keep him alive not so much beyond the ordinary term of human existence. It is one among the other traditions relating to the apostles, that St. John in particular never died; that though he ceased to appear, or to live among men, he was merely translated; and was reserved still in being somewhere against the end of the world. We know, indeed, that this tradition is refuted by the testimony of St. John's contemporaries, who have left it on record that he both died and was buried at Ephesus; yet it might obviously be invented to save the credit of the preceding expectation; especially as time advanced, and the coming of Christ, notwithstanding the belief in its proximity, before existing, was still apparently remote. Nor do we meet with the tradition, until the third or fourth century of ecclesiastical history.

Again, when we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that just after the ascension, and while the apostles were still earnestly gazing up to heaven, to follow the course of their Master, two angels appeared to them and said; "Men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This Jesus who hath been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come *after* what manner ye have beheld him going into heaven^o:" we see there is the same allusion to a future return of Jesus, as before; but when, and where, just as indeterminate as before also.

If we consider, however, that the assurance of the

^o Acts i. 10, 11. Harm. P. v. 17.

angels promises a return of the same Jesus, who was just gone away into heaven, not only of the fact in general, but after the manner or fashion, in which he had just been seen to go away into heaven; it becomes a legitimate inference that the circumstances of the promised return must be in general analogous to those of the witnessed departure.

For example, would the same Jesus return *after* the manner in which he had departed, unless, as he had gone up into heaven in a cloud, he were to return from heaven in a cloud? or if, as he had gone up into heaven from mount Olivet in particular, he did not descend from heaven again on mount Olivet in particular ^p?

This last is a significant circumstance, and absolutely indispensable to the correspondence between a return and a departure, which were to be exactly the counterparts of each other. It is my belief, that the mission of the angels, immediately after the ascension, and while the apostles were still upon the spot whence their Master had departed from them, was intended to communicate this particular assurance, more than for any thing else. A general

^p With regard to the expectation of a return of Christ, answering in all respects to the mode and circumstances of his departure, Sulpicius Severus tells us, in his life of St. Martin, that being once tempted by an appearance of Satan, under the form of Christ, as Satan would have had him suppose; but with the insignia of regal pomp and splendour; of Christ in short, returning to take possession of his kingdom; Martin answered, Non se Jesus Dominus purpuratum et diademate renitentem venturum esse prædixit. Ego Christum, nisi in eo habitu, formaque qua passus est, nisi crucis stigmata proferentem, venisse non credam: which declaration of his detected the cheat of the Devil. *Vita*, cap. 25.

expectation that Jesus would sometime return, the apostles must have had already ; for Jesus himself had often assured them of it : and a general anticipation that he would return upon clouds, they must also have entertained already ; for that too had been more than once told them by him. But a particular belief that mount Olivet would be the locality of the descent from heaven, they could no more have conceived, until assured of it by the angels, than they could have known or expected mount Olivet to be the locality of the departure thither, until they had been apprised of it by the event.

Let the reader compare this presumption, so obtained, with the import of the following passage from Zechariah ; and then say, whether there does not appear to be some reason for it.

“ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the
“ mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the
“ east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the
“ midst thereof toward the east and toward the west,
“ *and there shall be* a very great valley ; and half
“ of the mountain shall remove toward the north,
“ and half of it toward the south.” Zech. xiv. 4.

It is not my business at present, to explain the prophecies either of the Old or of the New Testament, which relate to the destruction of Antichrist, and the termination of the great antichristian contest : I will observe only that the above is part of the other disclosures in reference to that subject ; and it appears from this passage, that when the Lord interferes at last, to terminate at one blow this infidel contest, mount Olivet is the chosen scene on which he takes his stand : *his feet shall stand upon mount Olivet in that day.* Now it is at the time

of the destruction of Antichrist, and with the decision of the terrible antichristian contest, by an equally terrible display of omnipotent power and majesty, that the millenarian expects the first of the two future advents of Christ; and it is a tradition of the church, transmitted from a remote antiquity, that Antichrist will meet with his final overthrow, on the same mount Olivet, whence Christ ascended into heaven.

If, however, the advent of our Lord to the general judgment is one, which both the advocates and the opponents of the millennium agree in supposing will be followed by the end of all things; then if any advent of Christ is still to come, on which such consequences are described to ensue, as imply or require a longer continuance of the present state of things; this advent in particular cannot be the advent to the general judgment; and therefore must be some one, prior to it. Now there are a multitude of passages in scripture, which while they recognise as a preliminary fact, some personal return of Christ, speak of it as followed immediately by the establishment of a kingdom of some kind, which, it further appears, is supposed both to begin and to proceed upon earth. These passages I shall produce elsewhere: at present it suffices to refer to them, in order to shew that by recognising a state of being, posterior to a second personal advent of Christ, yet prior to the consummation of all things, they distinguish between the advent, which precedes such a state, and any other, which ushers in the end of the world.

I shall produce a passage, however, in which some coming of Jesus Christ is first alluded to, and a cer-

tain œconomy or state of things is next mentioned as consequent upon it; because of its connexion not only with our present proposition, but also with the next, which we shall have to pass to by and by.

“ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, *to the effect* that your sins may be blotted out; that seasons of refreshment may come from *the* presence of the Lord, and he may send *you* him that before was preached unto you, Jesus Christ: whom heaven indeed must receive (contain) until *the* times of *the* fulfilment of all things, which God hath spoken by *the* mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.” Acts iii. 19—21.

These words are a part of the sermon, addressed by St. Peter to the people in Jerusalem, on occasion of the miracle of healing the lame man, who was above forty years of age^q. It is a natural inference from them, that there were still seasons of refreshment, in reserve with the Lord, for the benefit of the Jews in particular; and that there was such a thing in futurity as another mission of the same Jesus, who had once been preached to the Jews before: but that neither these seasons of refreshment could arrive, nor that mission of Jesus take place, without the repentance and conversion of the Jews, in the first place, and the fulfilment of all that God had spoken by the prophets, in the next place; or what is the same thing, until both.

As far, then, as concerns our present proposition, another advent of Jesus Christ, who was gone into heaven, when an interval of time devoted to a certain proper purpose should have elapsed, is plainly foretold in these words; and that seasons of rest and

^q Acts iii. 1—iv. 22.

refreshment, for the benefit of the Jews in particular, should be consequent upon it : and as far as concerns our next proposition, neither of these things, it appears, can take place without the repentance and conversion of the Jews. What, then, are those seasons of refreshment, which the repentance and conversion of this people should procure to be sent from the face of the Lord ; should prevail upon him to ordain and concede from his presence ; and which the return, once again, of the same Jesus, who had already been preached to them before, should forthwith usher in and begin ?

A millenarian has no difficulty in answering this question. They are the appointed season and duration of the millenarian dispensation ; that blessed interval of rest and refreshment to all the sublunary works of God, which the very meaning of the terms employed to speak of it, so significantly points to : *Καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Κυρίου.* A period of refreshment, coming from the face of the Lord, is a communication to his creatures in this world, who stand in so much need of it, of some portion of his own happiness, “ in whose presence is the fulness of “ joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for “ evermore ; with whom is the wellspring of life “ and light ^r,” whence only both must be derived to his creatures.

An opponent of the millenary theory would be much more at a loss what to reply. His only plausible answer, that they are seasons of rest and refreshment in heaven—is debarred him, by the nature of the case. What can the repentance and conversion of the Jews have to do with the coming

^r Psalm xxxvi. 9.

of seasons of rest and comfort in heaven? Much more, what such seasons can be specially conceded—can go forth expressly from the face of God—on that account, in heaven? where his presence at all times diffuses ineffable joy and delight, incapable of degrees of increase, and not less incapable of diminution. What consistency too would there be, in supposing a mission of Jesus Christ again to the Jews *on earth*, expressly to usher in the commencement of a time of rest and refreshment *in heaven*?

We cannot suppose these things to be meant. The coming of a season of rest and refreshment is doubtless intended for that which wants it so much, this world of pain, and trouble, and misery^s: the mission of Jesus Christ is no doubt designed to usher it in there, where his mission is transacted and takes effect, viz. upon earth: the people, whose repentance and conversion, at present delayed, do equally delay the arrival of both, are doubtless intended largely to partake of the boon of rest and comfort, in their converted and reformed capacity, *where* alone they can properly do so, viz. *upon earth*. If so, these seasons of refreshment may indeed be the millennium: but, whatever they may be, if it is but something that must necessarily be transacted upon earth, the personal advent of Christ, which precedes it, is not an advent to the end of the world.

To come, however, to the proper consideration of our third proposition; a conversion of the Jews to Christianity collectively, and as a nation.

Luke xiii. 34, 35. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou*

^s Rom. viii. 18—24.

“ which killest the prophets, and stonest them that
 “ are sent unto thee ; how often would I have ga-
 “ thered together thy children, as a hen her own
 “ brood under her wings : and ye would not. Be-
 “ hold, your house is left unto you desolate : and ve-
 “ rily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until *the*
 “ *time* be come (*or*, it be come) when ye shall say,
 “ Blessed *be* he who is coming in *the* name of
 “ *the* Lord.”

These words made part of the answer, returned by our Saviour, to the Pharisees, who came to him, saying, “ Get thee out, and go from hence ; for “ Herod is wishing to kill thee †.” Jesus was then making his last circuit of Galilee, before his arrival at Jerusalem at the fourth passover ; and had not yet passed into Peræa.

Let us now compare them with the following from St. Matthew ; which are almost word for word the same.

Matt. xxiii. 37—39. “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
 “ *thou* which killest the prophets, and stonest them
 “ that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have
 “ gathered together thy children, as a hen gathereth
 “ together her own brood under *her* wings : and ye
 “ would not. Behold, your house is left unto you
 “ desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me
 “ henceforth, until ye shall say ; Blessed *be* he who
 “ is coming in *the* name of *the* Lord.”

These words were the last which our Saviour delivered in public, in the discharge of his ministry, before he made an end of it by his departure from the temple, on the evening of Wednesday in passion week †.

† Luke xiii. 31. Harm. P. iv. 37. † Harm. P. iv. 77.

A declaration, then, which it thus appears, though made originally before his arrival at Jerusalem, on occasion of the last passover, was repeated by him *verbatim*, several days after he had been there, never was intended, nor can justly be considered to refer beforehand, to any thing that passed, either in Jerusalem or elsewhere, between the two periods; and though after the first declaration, yet before the last.

Though therefore we may read in each of the evangelists ^x, that when our Lord made his public procession into Jerusalem from Bethany, on Monday in passion week, he was actually received and saluted by the assembled multitudes in language, much to the same effect as that implied above; “Blessed *be* he who is coming in *the* name of *the* Lord: (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου:;) it is quite certain that the occasion of this procession, and the fact of the welcome which the concourse of spectators should give him then, were no more intended by our Lord’s declaration in the first instance, as recorded by St. Luke, than they could have been by his declaration in the second, as related by St. Matthew.

The truth indeed is, that the concluding words in each instance are borrowed from Psalm cxviii. 26. “Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the “Lord:” a text which the people at large were as much at liberty to apply to our Saviour, if they thought fit, as he was, to apply to himself. And there was this further reason why both should coincide in making such an application of it, under the circumstances of the case, in each instance, that it

^x Matt. xxvi. 9: Mark xi. 9: Luke xix. 33: John xii. 13. Cf. Harm. P. iv. 64.

made part of a psalm, understood to refer to the Messiah, and so might be applied by our Lord to himself; and it was quoted by the people, as applicable to our Saviour, under the idea that he was then making his entry into Jerusalem in the very character of the Messiah. For the same reason, both as part of a psalm confessedly prophetic of the Messiah, and as defining the language afterwards familiarly employed in speaking of, or alluding to him; "He that is coming, in the name of the Lord;" we may justly contend that the import of a declaration, like this, "Ye shall see me no more, until ye shall say, Blessed *be* he who is coming in the name of the Lord," is tantamount to saying, Ye shall see me no more, until ye shall be disposed to receive me as your expected Messiah.

Let us then consider under what peculiar circumstances of time and place, we find our Saviour pronouncing an assurance of such an import as this; on the last of the occasions in question. It was in the temple, and at the moment of solemnly closing his ministry; that ministry, on which three full years from passover to passover had previously been spent. It was still in quality of the same Messiah, that he was closing his ministry, and taking leave of those, among whom it had hitherto been discharged, in which, until then, he had laboured among them: but it was in quality of a Messiah, who had as yet laboured in vain to gain their belief in the truth of what he was: of a Messiah, whom all had agreed to reject, and whose rejection, as final and complete, would be manifested in the face both of God and of man, only two days afterwards, by his ignominious death on the cross. He takes his

leave therefore of the Jews, on this mournful occasion, in his own character of a rejected Messiah, and in theirs of an impenitent and unconverted people. Yet he takes his leave, with this declaration, “Ye shall see me no more from henceforth, until ye shall say, *or* till the time shall arrive, when ye shall say, Blessed *be* he who is coming in the name of the Lord:” which is equivalent to saying, as we have seen, Ye shall see me no more, until ye shall receive me as your Messiah.

The future conversion of the Jews, then, and the appearance of Jesus again to them, either consequent upon it, or concomitant with it, are both of them facts, justly deducible from these words: the former, because, if the Jews are ever to be prepared to receive the same Jesus as their Messiah, whom they have hitherto refused to receive as such, they must be previously converted; the latter, because our Lord has said, that they should see him no more until then; and therefore has virtually promised that they shall see him then. Were they never to see him again in person, not even when they should be prepared to receive him as their Messiah, as they had heretofore seen him in person, when as yet they were disposed only to reject him; it is not conceivable that our Lord would have employed such language as he does. Ye shall not see me, *until* a certain time, in the ordinary acceptance of promises and assurances, is equivalent to saying, Ye shall see me, *at* that time; and is but another way of expressing it.

We meet with a prophecy in Zechariah, which promises a personal manifestation of the Christ, in the capacity of the same reprobated Messiah, in

which Jesus finally took leave of the people, because in the capacity of *him whom they pierced*: but to persons in a very different frame of mind, than they could have been in when they pierced him: that is, to persons, who though they had rejected him as the Messiah once, were now fully prepared to receive him again, and acknowledge him for such. And we find this prophecy, where the other particulars relating to the conversion of the Jews, and to the second advent of Christ, before the end of the world, are expected by the millenarians to meet with their fulfilment: viz. among the predictions relating to the catastrophe and sequel of the great antichristian contest.

Zechariah xii. 9, 10. “And it shall come to pass
 “ in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the na-
 “ tions that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour
 “ upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants
 “ of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplica-
 “ tions: and they shall look upon me whom they
 “ have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one
 “ mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitter-
 “ ness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his*
 “ firstborn ^y.”

And this description is in part applied by St. John to the Speaker in the Revelation, viz. to Jesus Christ: “Behold he is coming, with the clouds;
 “ and every eye shall see him, even they who have
 “ pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth
 “ (*perhaps*, all the tribes of the land) shall bewail
 “ themselves because of him. Even so, Amen ^z.”

Again, Rom. xi. 25—27: “For I would not have
 “ you be ignorant, brethren, of this secret, that ye

^y Cf. ver. 11—14.

^z Rev. i. 7.

“ may not be wise in your own conceits; that a
 “ blindness (a hardening) is happened to Israel in
 “ part, until the fulness of the Gentiles come in;
 “ and so shall all Israel be saved, as it is written,
 “ The deliverer shall come out of Sion, and shall
 “ turn away ungodlinesses from Jacob. And this *is*
 “ to them the covenant from me, when I take away
 “ their sins.”

The plainness of this prediction requires, and can receive, no additional light, from any commentary upon it. It is one of those truths, which even he that runneth may read. Upon the faith of this assurance, the conversion and salvation of the Jews may confidently be expected, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in. I have cited only that part of the chapter, which contains the simple, unqualified, and almost historical anticipation of the future fact; but under the figure of the ingrafting into their original stock, of the boughs of an olive, which had for a time been separated from it, verses 22—24. are not less explicit in predicting the same event.

In like manner, 2 Cor. iii. 13—16—as the existing infidelity of the Jews is attributed to their inability to penetrate the spiritual meaning of the vail, which still covered the face of Moses, that is, the true sense of the Law and the Prophets; so is the removal of the vail, which places that sense fully and clearly before them, described as the destined effect of their conversion: “ But unto this day, when
 “ Moses is reading, *the* vail is lying on their hearts;
 “ but when *it* shall turn to *the* Lord, the vail is
 “ taken off from *it*.” That the vail will some day be removed, we may gather assuredly from these words: that it will not be, until the heart of the

Jew has turned to the Lord, is equally to be collected from them. The conversion of the Jews, then, is necessary to the full revelation of the glory of the ancient dispensation, reflected indeed from Jesus, but visible on the face of Moses. And the conversion of the Jews in some sense or other, the turning of their heart back again, it has been already shewn, will very probably be the work of Elijah.

Let us now proceed to the proof of our fourth proposition; a resurrection of part of the dead, such as is called, by way of distinction, the resurrection of the just.

There is one passage of the Scriptures of the New Testament, which, being literally construed according to the plain, obvious meaning of its terms, must at once establish the futurity of such a resurrection; I mean Rev. xx. 4—6. But I shall reserve this passage for future consideration, where the literal construction of this, and similar parts of the book of Revelation, will come formally under discussion. There are not wanting other testimonies of the New Testament, besides this, which appear to me to intimate the futurity of a first and peculiar resurrection, as well as it.

For example, we have an account, Luke xiv. 1—24, of what passed, when our Saviour was bidden to eat bread in the house of a certain Pharisee. Among other things, he is said to have addressed his host in these terms.

“When thou art making a dinner or a supper,
“call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy
“kinsmen, nor neighbours *that are* rich; lest haply
“they also call thee in return, and a recompense be

“ made thee. But when thou art making a feast,
 “ bid *such as are* poor, maimed, lame, blind, and
 “ thou wilt be blessed; because they have not where-
 “ withal to pay thee again : for it shall be paid thee
 “ again in the resurrection of the just ^z.”

A resurrection of the just is here recognised by name; which, we may presume, it would not be, except as opposed, in some sense or other, to a resurrection of the unjust also. Now a resurrection of the just as such, when contradistinguished to a resurrection of the unjust as such, may fairly be supposed to imply either a resurrection of the just, and of the just alone; a resurrection in which none of the unjust as such will partake at the same time, and on the same occasion; or at least a resurrection, in the benefits and effects of which the just as such, and they only, will have a direct and personal interest. Neither of these suppositions appears to be applicable to the nature and consequences of the resurrection, as described in Scripture, which may be expected at the last day. All, both just and unjust alike, are spoken of as raised at once, and as brought to their trial at once, upon that occasion; and all as receiving alike their appropriate recompense of reward, in consequence of their trial, whether for good or for evil, upon the same occasion also. Either of the above suppositions, however, is capable of applying to the description given in the book of Revelation, of what is there called the first resurrection; a resurrection in the fact of which, or in the blessed effects of which, none but the saints, that is, none but the just and righteous, are said to be personally concerned.

^z Luke xiv. 12—14. Harm. P. iv. 39.

Moreover, the context of the passage in question shews that the purport of our Lord's observations was not to prohibit the doing of good, in the hope of some reward for it; nor even in the hope of a reward in kind: but, supposing it to be both natural and right that men should do good to their fellow creatures from such motives as these; to instruct his hearers what method of doing good to take, what selection to make of the objects of their beneficence, the most effectually to secure the proposed reward, even the reward in kind. This is, to choose such objects of beneficence, as cannot return in kind the favour conferred upon them, if they would; to prefer such acts and instances of charity, as from the nature of the case, cannot possibly be requited to their authors in this life, and if requited at all, must be so in another state of being. Such are entertainments provided for the necessities of the poor and helpless; who, however grateful they may be for the kindness done them, can make no like acknowledgment of it in return. If these, then, are ever to be requited to their authors, it must be by God, instead of those who were properly their subjects; if they are to be requited by God, it must be in another life; and if they are to be by him requited in another life, in any sense equivalent to a return of them in kind, it must be in some such state of things, as will ensue upon the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection of the just, understood as synonymous with the millenary dispensation, is a resurrection expressly intended for the reward of good deeds in kind; and that the just may receive in the body the precise equivalent, and more than equi-

valent, of those various acts of charity, almsdoing, and benevolence, which they have performed in the body. In my apprehension, it is an infallible criterion of the first resurrection—of that resurrection, which is to be followed by the millennium—when the rewards then promised, and then to be bestowed, are described under the images of sense. Such descriptions, in reference to the millenary state of things, may be not more figurative than real; which cannot be supposed even possible of the instances of those rewards, which must be considered as proposed to the enjoyment of the blessed in heaven. Upon this particular question of a reward in kind, answerable to the merit of good deeds in kind; the abundance of all things, which may be expected from the goodness and love of God, when exerted under such a dispensation as the millennium, in which divine power will contend with divine bounty, whether the one shall devise, or the other shall supply, a greater profusion of every sensible good, consistent with the holiness of the giver, and the innocence of the receivers; will doubtless be an overflowing measure of return, even in kind, for all those instances of Christian charity, wherein good and pious men have ministered of their own substance to the necessities of their poorer brethren, and have denied themselves, and their own enjoyments, in this life, that they might have to give, for Christ's sake, to those that wanted.

Again, *Philipp. iii. 10*: St. Paul makes use of remarkable language, which may lead to the inference that he knew there was to be a resurrection of the dead, in the benefits at least of which none could hope to partake, who had not first partaken

in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, and been conformed to the likeness of his death. For, after saying that he counted all things but as loss, and as worse than loss, for the sake of Christ, which the rest of the world might have considered to be gain, and matter in which to glory, he subjoins the reason why he did so: "That I may know him, and
" the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship
" of his sufferings, conforming myself to his death,
" if by any means I may attain to the resurrection
" of the dead."

There was a resurrection of the dead to come, to which nobody knew better than St. Paul, that all men must attain, as matter of course; viz. the general one, at the end of the world. Can this, then, be the resurrection in which he expresses a hope, mixed with some uncertainty, that it might haply be his own lot to partake? But if there be a particular resurrection, before the end of the world, in the benefits of which none but the good and faithful will be admitted to share, St. Paul might speak in such terms of his hope of perhaps attaining to that; did his faith and patience entitle him to it.

Again, Rom. xi. 12—15: "For if the fall of them
" *be the* world's wealth, and the diminution of them
" *the* Gentiles' wealth, how much more the fulness
" of them? . . . For if the casting off of them be *the*
" world's reconciliation, what *is* the reception of them
" but life from *the* dead?"

These words also are from the same chapter, which promised so plainly the future conversion of the Jews; and they are in reference to the same subject, the restoration of the people of God to their

former favour with him, and the consequence of that restoration to the world. This consequence, it is said, shall be a ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν, a life from the dead. But what sort of life? a *spiritual* life from the dead, or a *real*?

Now a spiritual life from the dead, in its effects upon the world as such, must imply an extension of the empire of true religion both in the hearts and affections, and among the societies of mankind, to a degree that has never previously taken place; that is, it would imply a conversion of the Gentiles to the faith in Christ, not in name only, but in deed also, such as never before has been witnessed. But no such effect can follow on the conversion of the Jews, because the conversion of the Jews itself cannot take place, until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in: and when the numbers of the Gentiles are full, what further addition to them can be expected? The resurrection then from the dead, which is to ensue upon the conversion of the Jews, is no such spiritual regeneration of the world, as this. If so, it must be a literal resurrection from the dead: and such a resurrection do the millennarians look for—after the second advent of Christ, and the conversion of the Jews, but before the commencement of the millenary œconomy—in their resurrection of the just. Nor is it perhaps an unmeaning circumstance, that St. Paul speaks of this resurrection, as ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν, “life *from* the dead,” not as ζωὴ τῶν νεκρῶν, “life *of* the dead;” implying possibly, that part only of the dead are then to rise, not the whole.

If a spiritual resurrection from the dead must be understood of the quickening mankind anew to a better, a holier, and a more moral life; of the simple

regeneration of a world previously as good as dead in trespasses and sins; it becomes an additional reason why no such event can be expected to follow on the future conversion, and restoration to favour, of the Jews, that this kind of a resurrection in particular, as far as they were concerned, who stood most in need of it, the Gentile world, was the consequence of the previous rejection of the same people, and is strongly insisted on by St. Paul accordingly. The fall (*παράπτωμα*) of the Jew had been already the wealth of the world; the diminution (*ἕττηγμα*) of the Jew had proved already the wealth (*πλοῦτος*) of the Gentile; and the casting off (*ἀποβολή*) of the people of God, had entailed upon it the reconciliation to God (*καταλλαγῆ*) of those, who before were aliens from him.

What, then, should the reverse of each of these things, as concerned the Jew, be the means of producing, as concerned the world? Surely, no repetition of the same effects over again, but something never before witnessed! Surely, no continuance of the same kind of operation, when the nature of the operating cause was so materially altered, ennobled, and dignified! The recovery of his former standing by the Jew must produce some more signal and characteristic impression, on the circumstances of the world, than his previous fall; his enriching must work more marvellously than his impoverishing, and his restoration to favour with God bring about something more glorious far, than his temporary rejection had done. Nothing, in short, as St. Paul hints, less than the reviviscence of the dead themselves, and the calling into being again of those, who had ceased apparently for ever to be. The living

or sensible world, with its inmates, had been the subjects of the effects, produced by their disgrace and loss; the world of departed spirits should be the subjects of what was destined to follow on their recovery of honour, of place, and of estimation with God.

Again, 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23: "For as in Adam all *men* die, so also in Christ shall all *men* be made alive. But every one in his own order^a: *the* first-fruit, Christ; then they that are Christ's, in his "appearing and presence:" upon which words, the same difficulty might be raised, as upon the passage quoted from Philippians, if there were not a double resurrection, the former exclusively appropriated to those that are Christ's, the latter not. For, if otherwise, why should those that are Christ's, alone be mentioned, where all mankind were meant; among whom there must be many that in no sense are his, neither as Jews nor as Christians, nor as good and virtuous heathens?

The context confirms this construction. If, while all are to be made alive in Christ, each is notwithstanding to be made alive in his own order; then they that are Christ's must be made alive, in their proper order of time and succession, as referred to those, who are not Christ's, as much as Christ was, in his capacity of the firstfruit of them that slept,

^a The word which is rendered *order*, means properly division, body, company: and the intent of it here, seems to be to imply that such and such a number of the dead will be raised together, not all of them at once; every one who is raised will belong to this order or body of the raised, or to that; but not all to the same. The first division of this description is that which is called immediately after *οἱ Χριστοῦ*.

with reference even to those that are his. Those who are none of Christ's, will nevertheless be made alive by Christ, just as much as those who are his; if so be, that all of every sort shall be made alive in him, as truly and as generally, as all, and of every sort, have been made mortal in Adam. As the resurrection of the firstfruit, then, Christ himself, necessarily preceded that of those that are his; so, on the principle of a similar analogy, may the resurrection of those that are his, be expected to precede that of the rest of the world. But if there is to be a distinction in the order and succession of those who are to be raised from the dead, there is such a thing as a first resurrection, and a second; the former whereof, according to the doctrine of the millennialians, is properly the resurrection of the just.

There is a passage, 1 Thess. iv. 16: where, after telling us that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, "with a shout of command, with an archangel's voice, and with a trumpet of God," (ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου, καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι Θεοῦ,) it is added, "and the dead in Christ shall rise again first," (καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον.) The dead in Christ here are clearly the same as they that were Christ's, mentioned before; and this second passage seems further to confirm the inference, which we deduced from the former, respecting the order of time and succession in which the dead will be restored to life, by speaking of the dead in Christ, as to rise *first*. Nor will I admit that such is not after all the true sense of the passage; or that the adverb *first* (πρῶτον) was not intended to refer to what goes before, instead of to any thing that follows after

it. But the next sentence is certainly introduced by another adverb of time, *then*, (*ἔπειτα*,) which leaves it questionable whether the former is not to be referred to that; so that the meaning of both propositions should be this; that the dead in Christ will be raised *first*, before they, that is, the living at the time of his appearance, will be caught up together with them, to meet him in the air. This also is a possible construction of the passage: but even with it, there is no mention here of the raising any of the dead to life, except the dead in Christ, no more than before; that is, it recognises not a resurrection of the dead in general, but of one class of the dead in particular.

I cannot help thinking that the fact which is mentioned, Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, the resuscitation of the dead bodies of many of the saints, that slept; and their reappearance to many in Jerusalem, after the resurrection of our Lord himself; was intended as an earnest of the general resurrection of the saints, or of the dead in Christ, at the time of his second advent.

If, however, there is reason from the disclosures of the New Testament, to believe in the futurity of a twofold resurrection, the first peculiar to the saints, as such, we shall so much the better understand and apply certain allusions to the topic of a resurrection, which appear in the Old Testament. More especially, Dan. xii. 2: “And many of them that sleep
“ in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to ever-
“ lasting life, and some to shame, and everlasting
“ contempt:” which speaks so plainly of a resurrection of the dead, but only of a part of them, becomes on every principle of a sound and legitimate con-

struction, referable to the first of these events; which will exactly answer to it. It is an additional argument why it should be so referred, that it follows, in the course of futurity, where the doctrine of the millennium places the resurrection of the just; viz. upon the destruction of Antichrist.

The same distinction in the order and kind of the two resurrections in question, may reasonably induce us to conclude that holy Job had the first of them, most probably, in view, when he uttered that memorable testimony to the belief of a resurrection in general.

Job xix. 25—27: “ For I know *that* my Redeemer
“ liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day*
“ upon the earth: and *though* after my skin *worms*
“ destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:
“ whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall
“ behold, and not another; *though* my reins be con-
“ sumed within me.”

The same may be said of Isaiah xxvi. 19: “ Thy
“ dead *men* shall live, *together with* my dead body
“ shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell
“ in dust; for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and
“ the earth shall cast out the dead ^b.”

Let us now proceed to the consideration of our fifth proposition; the restitution of the kingdom to Israel, including the appearance and manifestation of the Messiah of the Jews, in the character of a temporal monarch.

Luke i. 32, 33: “ This *one* shall be great, and
“ shall be called *the* son of *the* Most High: and the
“ LORD God shall give unto him the throne of

^b Cf. also Psalm xlix. 14, 15.

“ David his father, and he shall reign over the house
 “ of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall
 “ not be an end.”

These words were part of the message of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, at the time of the annunciation of the birth of Jesus Christ^c. The emphatic circumstance of the declaration, and that which we are justified in insisting upon most, to warrant the expectation of a temporal kingdom of Christ, is the assurance that the Lord God should give to him the throne of David his father. Is it consistent with the truth of such an assurance, to suppose that any thing was to be given to Christ, which had not before been possessed by David? much less, given to him as his son, which had not before been possessed by David as his father? If not—such an assurance supplies the readiest answer to all, who by opposing the doctrine of a temporal kingdom of Christ, without denying the fact of some kingdom of his in general, maintain of course that this kingdom is simply and purely a spiritual one. Was Christ to inherit the throne of David his father? If so—the throne of David was a temporal throne. Christ may have a spiritual kingdom, to be sure; but this is not the kingdom of David his father; he may sit on a spiritual throne; but he does not sit upon it as the son of David.

We shall not do justice to the meaning of the above declaration, concerning the restoration of the throne, once possessed by David, in the person of Christ, unless we compare it with two remarkable passages in the Old Testament, both of them re-

^c Harm. P. i. 4.

lating to the alienation of that throne from the posterity of David.

Psalm lxxxix. 19—36. conveys to the family of David according to the flesh, (*κατὰ σάρκα*), as strongly and plainly as language can express it, the assurance of an indefeasible right to the throne of David, as transmitted by him to his posterity; the promise of a perpetual succession in the kingdom, as inherited by descent from him. So likewise Psalm cxxxii. 11, 12, 17, 18. Compare also 2 Sam. vii. 12; 2 Chron. vi. 16; 1 Kings viii. 25. Jeremiah xxxiii. 17, 20, 21. affirms the same thing in the most striking and solemn manner:

“ For thus saith the Lord; David shall never
 “ want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of
 “ Israel; thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my
 “ covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night,
 “ that there should not be day and night in their
 “ season; *then* may also my covenant be broken
 “ with David my servant, that he should not have a
 “ son to reign upon his throne.” Cf. ver. 25, 26.

The last princes of the house of David, who ever reigned over Judah, were Coniah or Jeconiah, and Zedekiah. Let us now hear what the word of prophecy said, with respect to any successors in the throne of David, next after them.

First, Jeremiah xxii. 29, 30: “ O earth, earth,
 “ earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the
 “ Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man *that*
 “ shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his
 “ seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of
 “ David, and ruling any more in Judah.”

The peculiar solemnity of the exordium of this passage shews that it was intended to usher in a

prediction of no ordinary magnitude and importance: nothing less in short, as it appears, than the cutting off all hope of succession in the throne of David, as dependent upon its continuance in the line of Coniah; and so far the defeasance of the right to a never failing inheritance of the kingdom, which had been originally promised to him and his posterity.

That Coniah, or Jeconiah, is the person spoken of, appears from verse 28: and that the curse of childlessness is denounced against him, solely as the present possessor of the throne of David, and in whose issue, if continued to his posterity at all, its possession must still be propagated downwards, further appears both from the context, and from the fact historically recorded of Jeconiah, that he had indeed children, begotten and born after his deportation to Babylon; and therefore was not, nor destined to be, absolutely childless. But he was childless, in the sense of wanting an heir in the lineal succession to the throne of his ancestors: for neither he, nor any of his children, ever again sate on that throne, from which he had once been dispossessed by his captivity, and removal to Babylon.

Still, however, there was another lineal descendant of David, who succeeded to Jeconiah in the possession of the throne of David, even after its vacation by him; Zedekiah, his father Jehoiachim's brother. Let us next see what verdict contemporary prophecy pronounced against him.

Ezekiel xxi. 25—27. “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and

“ abase *him that is high*. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it : and it shall be no *more*, until “ he come whose right it is ; and I will give it “ *him*.”

Who does not hear in Ezekiel's triple *overturn*, the echo of Jeremiah's triple apostrophe to the earth ? And this last prophecy further supplies an important omission in the former ; viz. that while it predicts the total alienation of the diadem and crown, from their present possessor, as plainly as Jeremiah's did the cutting off the succession in the line of David, after Jeconiah, it yet specifies that the alienation in the one case, and by parity of reason the cutting off of the succession in the other, were to be only temporary. One should come, whose right the diadem and crown, though alienated from the present possessor, were still considered to be, and to him they should be restored : and on the same principle, the recovery of the diadem and crown could not fail to reunite the interrupted succession from David.

Ezekiel's prophecy therefore, reconciles the fact of a suspension of kings in the line of David, with the original promise of a perpetual succession ; and the deprivation of the right to his crown and diadem, with the truth of the engagement, by which they had been guaranteed to his posterity for ever. The suspension was only partial ; the deprivation was only temporary. The royal succession in the line of David, the inheritance of his crown and sceptre, might be withheld from a certain portion of his descendants, and lost for a certain number of generations ; but they were not to be withheld from his posterity absolutely, nor was their loss to be perpetual. Even

as alienated from one class of the descendants of David, they were still acknowledged to belong to his family; they were but laid by, and kept in reserve, until one should come, whose right they were; and to him, on his appearing to claim them, they should be restored.

That this person must be some lineal descendant of David, is self-evident; that he was our Saviour Jesus Christ every Christian will grant. But even our Saviour would not be described so emphatically beforehand, as he "whose right it was," if besides being lineally descended from David, he did not unite in his single person the right of all the posterity of David, in either of its lines, at the time of his own birth, to the indefeasible possession of the throne of David. Now this he did, as standing in the same relation of son to David, with the right of primogeniture centering in him, both by the line of Solomon, and by that of Nathan; each of them alike descended from David and Bathsheba, to whose posterity in particular, the original grant had specially restricted the promise of an hereditary temporal kingdom.

At the captivity these lines were united in the person of Zorobabel; and at the birth of Christ they were united in the person of Christ: the right of Resa, one of the sons of Zorobabel, being transmitted to him through Eli and Mary; and the right of Abiud, another son of Zorobabel, through Joseph^d. By this means, the right of the posterity of David to the temporal throne of Israel, such as it had been guaranteed to them for ever by the promise of God, before David had any posterity; and indefeasible

^d See my Dissertations, vol. ii. Diss. II. also Harm. P. i. 10.

as it continued, by virtue of that guarantee, even when it seemed to have fallen into abeyance, upon the death of Zedekiah, at the first captivity—became finally centred in the person of Jesus Christ, both in the natural sense, as the firstborn of Mary, and in the civil or legal, as the firstborn of Joseph. To him, too, the word of prophecy was pledged that the dormant right and title of the family of David to all their hereditary privileges, should be restored when he came. As these hereditary privileges are represented under the image of the diadem and crown, that is, the insignia of royalty, and such insignia as were previously supposed to be worn by the last of the monarchs of the family of David; the restitution of such insignia to him whose right they were, is clearly the restitution of the temporal kingdom to the rightful hereditary possessor, whosoever he was. It can be no spiritual kingdom, which is denoted by the insignia of royalty, removed for a time from the head of Zedekiah, and laid by in reserve for some successor of his, who should appear in the fulness of time, to claim them again, and to receive them back.

The language, then, of the angel Gabriel to Mary is perceptibly conformable to that of the prophet Ezekiel. The Lord God, said the prophet, should give the diadem and crown of the kings of Israel, the descendants of David, to him, whose right they were: the Lord God, says the angel to the Virgin, should give to Jesus her son, the throne of his father David. Meantime, the diadem and crown of the kings of Israel had long been overturned; the hereditary throne of David had long been vacant: but though overturned and removed from sight, the in-

signia of temporal royalty were still somewhere in being; and though vacated for so many generations, the throne of David was still sometime to have a successor.

There are other passages in the Old Testament, which deserve to be compared with these two that we have considered at length, as speaking a language precisely to the same effect with them; representing the Messiah as a king, by virtue of his descent from David; as inheriting the throne of David; as the same with David himself, the founder of the line, and the original source whence the right to the temporal promise was transmitted to his posterity; as retaining his right to the temporal promise even when its enjoyment for a time had been suspended; as recovering it, and entering upon the possession of it, *de novo*, never to be deprived of it again^e.

Again, Acts i. 6, 7, “They, therefore, that were “come together, asked of him, saying, Lord, dost “thou restore the kingdom to Israel at this time? “And he said unto them, It is not yours to know “times or seasons, which the Father hath put in “his own disposal.”

Such was the question put by the apostles to our Lord, on the last occasion of their meeting, before his departure into heaven^f; at which time more than any other, it would seem to have been most needful, and therefore to be most likely, that if they still entertained a false or erroneous notion as to the

^e Isaiah ix. 6, 7: xvi. 5: xxii. 21, 22: lv. 3. Jeremiah xxiii. 5: xxx. 9: xxxiii. 15. Ezekiel xxxiv. 23, 24: xxxvii. 24, 25. Amos ix. 11.

^f Harm. P. v. 15.

very existence in futurity of such a thing as the restitution of the kingdom to Israel, they should have this mistake corrected, and be told what was the truth.

Now the import of the question which they put to our Saviour, was manifestly *this*: not to be informed if there was ever to be such a thing as the restitution of the kingdom to Israel—and a restitution to be effected by Christ himself; but, taking that for granted—to know if the time of the restitution was come; whether it would be restored by him *then*. The answer of our Lord to their question is just as plainly directed to *this* point; not to assure them it was a false and mistaken idea to expect the restitution of the kingdom, some time or other; but to reprove them for asking to be certified about the *time*: assigning as the reason of the reproof, that times and seasons were things which the Father had purposely reserved in his own disposal, to antedate or procrastinate, or to do neither with them, as he best saw fit; and therefore, were not to be inquired about as legitimate objects of human curiosity.

Such I contend is the plain meaning both of the question and answer, which passed upon this occasion; relating to the future restitution of the kingdom to Israel, by Jesus Christ: not to be certified as to the fact of any such restitution in general, but as to one of the circumstances merely of the fact, the circumstance of its time—taking it for granted that such a restitution was *sometime* or other to take place, to be informed whether it was to take place *then*. In the implicit admission that a restitution of the kingdom to Israel was sometime to be expected, both parties in the dialogue are agreed: but

the question of the apostles desired specific information concerning the time of the event; our Lord's answer declined to give it, because it was not even proper to ask for it; because it was not becoming to pry into mysteries or secrets, purposely concealed by the Father.

We might argue in like manner, from our Saviour's reply to the two disciples, with whom he conversed on the way to Emmaus, after his resurrection; "O ye without understanding, and slow in your heart to believe all *things* which the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory ^g?"—a reply, which was mainly addressed, as is very evident, to that part of their previous discourse, which expressed the disappointment of their hopes by the unexpected event of the death of their Master; "But we were hoping that he himself was he who is to redeem Israel ^h."—We might argue, I say, that they were not mistaken in expecting the Christ to be the Redeemer of Israel—that is, a temporal deliverer in general, such as both they, and all the nation, were looking for—but in expecting him to be so *then*: that the particular want of understanding, and slowness of heart, with which they are reproached, consisted not in their having been unable to discern the only true meaning of those parts of Scripture, which held out the promise of a temporal deliverer, in the attributes of a spiritual Saviour, but simply, in having overlooked the appointed order and course of succession, in which only those promises could be realized. The Christ, even as a temporal Redeemer, was bound to suffer, before he could enter into his

^g Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Harm. P. v. 7. ^h Ibid. 21.

glory. They should have expected from Scripture a suffering Messiah first, and a triumphant one afterwards.

Various too are the passages in the Gospels, where Christ is spoken of as a king in the sense of a temporal king: leaving it to be implied that such a description is strictly applicable to him in general. Thus in the *Magnificat* of the Virgin; “He hath wrought might with his arm; he hath scattered proud ones in the thought of their heart: he hath pulled down potentates from thrones, and lifted up them of low degreeⁱ”—are temporal monarchs to be understood by the proud in the thought of their heart, whom God had scattered; and by the potentates or mighty ones, whom he had pulled down from thrones; and must not a temporal monarch be understood by the lowly of degree and humble, lifted to eminence in their stead?

The present reduced condition of the family of David, to whom the right of the throne still belonged notwithstanding their poverty, and humbleness of circumstances, is the idea apparently present to the mind of the speaker; and which suggests the peculiar antithesis of the terms in which she characterises this dispensation of Providence, to restore them to their ancient rank and dignity. There may be too in her words, a significant allusion to certain schemes of worldly policy, to certain hopes and prospects of personal aggrandizement, which we know from Josephus that the reigning family, Herod's, must have been conceiving at this time^k; so far even as to expect the rise of the Messiah himself, in their line, much more the perpetuation of the

ⁱ Luke i. 51, 52. Harm. P. i. 5. ^k Ant. Jud. xvii. II. 4.

sovereignty of Judæa in their posterity. Yet such was the juncture which God had chosen, to raise up in an obscure corner of Galilee, from the long neglected family of David, an heir and successor to the magnificent promises, which had been originally made to David and his royal descendants.

Again, the magi came to Jerusalem, from the east country, inquiring, "Where is the King of the Jews, "who is born¹?" which Herod, and all Jerusalem, and the great council of the sanhedrim, understood to be an inquiry after the Christ, in the capacity of a temporal Prince. The same supernatural revelation then, which had made known to the magi the fact of his birth, must have made known to them also the truth of his character as a King: and the prophecy of Micah v. 2. applied by the sanhedrim to designate the birthplace of the Christ, is applied as defining the birthplace of a temporal prince or leader: whose office should be to *feed*, or to *tend*, his people.

Again, the third temptation in the order of St. Matthew, which was also truly the last^m, consisting, as it did, in the offer to Christ, by the Devil, of all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, if he would fall down and worship him; becomes much more significant, if these kingdoms and their glory (as we have it expressed Rev. xi. 15.) were sometime actually to become the prerogative of the Messiah—than if they never are so. The thing, proposed to the acceptance of Christ, was not in this case, as it must have been in the other, an absolute nonentity, which he could at no time look forward to enjoy; but a reality, which was even then his in

¹ Matt. ii. 2. Harm. P. i. 12.

^m Matt. iv. 8—10; cf. Luke iv. 5—8. Harm. P. ii. 7.

reversion—only after a time of expectation, and by a mode of acquisition, both previously defined and limited.

Again, Nathanael, as soon as his mind had been opened to the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, recognises him immediately by the title of the Son of God, and of the King of Israelⁿ; which he no doubt meant in the sense of a temporal king. Does our Saviour correct his mistake, if it was one? No; recognising implicitly the truth of the epithets, applied in the strength of his faith to himself, he tells him merely that his faith itself should have greater proofs to rest upon, than had yet been given it.

Jesus permitted the people to welcome his entry into Jerusalem, at the last passover, with such language and acclamations, as could have been addressed to him only in the character of a temporal king: nay more, he condescended himself, on that last occasion, so far to confirm or countenance the people in their idea of the reality of his character in that respect, as to enter the city with a degree of pomp and solemnity, proper only for one who was actually appearing in the character of a king^o.

It was as setting himself up in the capacity of a temporal king, that he was denounced to Pilate by the Jewish sanhedrim, and charged with rebelling against the Roman emperor^p. It was in answer to a question of Pilate's, intended to inquire whether he was truly such a king or not, that Jesus replied in the affirmative, both in private and in public;

ⁿ John i. 50. Harm. P. ii. 10.

^o Matt. xxi. 1—11. 14—17. Mark xi. 1—11. Luke xix. 29—44. John xii. 12—36. Harm. P. iv. 64.

^p Luke xxiii. 2. Harm. P. iv. 99.

and thereby witnessed the good confession alluded to by St. Paul ^q.

It was in the supposed character of a temporal king, and in contempt of the alleged assumption of such a character by such a person; or of the charge of such an assumption, brought against him by his accusers; that Jesus both by Pilate and by Herod was treated in mockery with regal honours, and clothed in the robe peculiar to kings ^r.

It was still in the same supposed character of a temporal king, that he was finally even crucified. The superscription of his accusation bore no other title, notified the sufferer, or specified the reason of his suffering, by no other avowal than this: *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews* ^s. In all these instances, the title of the King of the Jews, as applied to our Saviour, whether in earnest or in derision, undoubtedly meant such a king as the whole nation expected; no spiritual monarch, but a temporal prince.

To mention no more.—The prayer of the penitent and believing robber, “Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom ^t,” was delivered in faith not only of the futurity of some kingdom of Christ’s in general, but of such a kingdom as this in particular. It would be absurd to suppose that this individual robber had any other notion of the kingdom in question, than the rest of his country-

^q John xviii. 37. Harm. P. iv. 98. Matt. xxvii. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. 1 Tim. vi. 13. Harm. P. iv. 99.

^r John xix. 1—5. Luke xxiii. 4—12. Harm. P. iv. 98, 99.

^s John xix. 14, 15. 19—22. Matt. xxvii. 27—30. 37. Mark xv. 12. 16—19. 26. Luke xxiii. 38. Harm. P. iv. 99—101.

^t Luke xxiii. 42, 43. Harm. P. iv. 101.

men: and it is manifest that the words of his petition have a reference to the inscription on the cross of Jesus, which set him forth as a temporal king; the same inscription, which produced the railing of his fellow malefactor, and the expression of his own faith. And what was the answer of Jesus to his prayer? "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And in what way was this an answer to the prayer, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom?" Why, by promising that he should that day be with Jesus in paradise, it gave him the most convincing assurance that he should be remembered, when Christ came in his kingdom; for in paradise are the souls of all the good and faithful reserved, against the time for their manifestation again in the flesh, along with Christ, in his kingdom.

Lastly, Luke xxi. 24: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden (*literally* a treading) under foot of Gentiles, until *the* seasons of Gentiles are fulfilled^u:" if Jerusalem is to continue trodden down, till a certain time is accomplished, at the end of that time, it seems a necessary inference that it must cease to be so trodden down: and if it is to continue trodden down of Gentiles, till then, at the end of that time it must cease to be trodden down of Gentiles; and therefore, it may reasonably be inferred, it must be restored to its own people; it cannot both cease to be trodden down of strangers, and not be restored to its own people, notwithstanding. It began to be trodden down of strangers, by ceasing to be possessed of its own people; and therefore if it ceases to be any longer trodden down of strangers,

^u Harm. P. iv. 78.

it must begin to be reoccupied by its own possessors ^x.

We may now proceed to the consideration of our sixth proposition; the several particulars of which were as follows:

A conformation of this kingdom to a state or condition of society, of which Christ will be the Head, and faithful believers, both Jews and Gentiles, will be the members.

A distribution of rewards and dignities in it, proportioned to the respective merits or good deserts of the receivers.

A resulting state of things, which though transacted upon earth, and adapted to the nature and constitution of a human society as such, leaves nothing to be desired for its perfection and happiness.

With respect to the first of these positions: the transfiguration of our Lord is an event in his history, which each of the three evangelists, who record it, agrees in specifying to have happened at the same distance of time from the same prediction, delivered on the day of Peter's confession of Jesus to be the Son of God, that "there were some standing there, who should not taste of death, until they had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom," according to St. Matthew; or "the kingdom of God, come in power," (*ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει,*) according to St. Mark; or simply "the kingdom of God," according

^x Even Dr. Whitby, though a strenuous opponent of the millennium, allows the justness of the inference, founded upon this text, that Jerusalem will again sometime be restored to the Jews.

to St. Luke^x. Within an eight days' time, after this promise, the transfiguration took place.

It seems a natural inference, then, that whatever further use the event of the transfiguration might be intended to serve, to verify this prediction was its primary design and purpose; and therefore, that to have been present at the transfiguration was first and properly the fulfilment of the promise, that there were some standing there, who should not taste of death until they had seen the Son of man, coming in his kingdom, or the kingdom of God, come in power. The transfiguration, then, was in some sense or other the coming of the Son of man, in his kingdom, or of the kingdom of God, in power.

Even the transfiguration, however, could not answer to either of these events in their literal sense. In what sense, then, could it answer to them at all? By being a type, symbol, or emblem, of what they would be in their literal sense; by being a representation beforehand of what the actual coming of the Son of man, in his kingdom, was destined to be, when it arrived. With such a design and reference, even the present event of the transfiguration might be considered a symbolical anticipation of the future kingdom; a prototype or exemplar of it, which might even then portray to the eyes of the observers, the nature and outlines of its counterpart, however distant and concealed in mystery.

At the transfiguration, our Saviour Jesus Christ himself was revealed in a new and a glorified form: Moses and Elijah, the two most illustrious of the prophets of the old dispensation, were manifested in glory also: and the first person in the holy Trinity,

^x Matt. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27. Harm. P. iv. 9, 10.

was himself likewise declared, as taking a part in the same scene, both by the luminous cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, and by the voice, with which he attested his personal proximity: and all this was exhibited to the eyes and ears of sense, in the person of the three apostles, who were present at the occasion. Surely the grandeur and solemnity of such a spectacle; the peculiar character of the agents who bore a part in the transaction; and the form and circumstances under which they respectively appeared; point out this whole phenomenon, as a striking representation beforehand of a corresponding future truth, the coming of the kingdom of God in power; the appearance of Christ in his glory; the simultaneous appearance of the saints, who follow in his train, in glory also; and the permanent establishment of a state of things upon earth, visible to the eyes of sense, in which heaven and earth shall be indissolubly united in communion.

This view of the final end of the transfiguration, as a type and an earnest of the millenary kingdom of Christ; both that it will sometime arrive, and of what nature it will be, when it does, derives much countenance and support from 2 Pet. i. 16—18.

“ For we did not conform to cunningly devised
“ fables, when we made known to you the power
“ and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *as*
“ having been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For
“ when he received from God *the* Father, honour
“ and glory, such a voice being brought to him by
“ the magnificent glory: This is my Son, my beloved
“ *one*, in whom I am well pleased—and this voice,
“ being brought from heaven, did we hear, being
“ with him in the holy mount.”

No one who reads this passage, requires to be told that St. Peter is referring in the latter part of it, to the transfiguration; at which he himself had been present. We may reason from it therefore, as follows: St. Peter had made known to his converts a future event, which he calls the power (*δύναμις*) and presence (*παρουσία*) of the Lord Jesus Christ: he had confirmed to them the certainty of this future event, by the testimony of a past, the testimony of the transfiguration: the nature of the future event was such, that without such an attestation to its possibility, or to its futurity, as was supplied by the fact of the transfiguration, it must have been accounted a cunningly devised fable (*μῦθος σεσοφισμένος*)—but with that evidence, both its possibility and its futurity were placed beyond a question. No one, who believed in the past fact of the transfiguration, could hesitate to believe in the future one of the coming and power of Christ.

The connexion, then, between the two things, the final end of the transfiguration, and the coming of Christ in his kingdom, seems to be thus established by the testimony of an eyewitness, St. Peter: which may justly lead to the inference that the representation which took place at the transfiguration, was purposely intended as a prototype of the state of things to ensue, upon the coming of Christ. In this case, the past event of the transfiguration might naturally be appealed to, as the best evidence of the truth of the doctrine of the future kingdom, not only by shewing such a kingdom to be possible in general, but as delineating beforehand, what sort of kingdom it would be when it arrived in particular.

It must be confessed, that the doctrine of a mil-

lennium, when first stated, has much of the air and appearance of a cunningly devised fable; that it looks more like a romance, or fiction of poetry, than a grave matter of faith, sometime to be realized by the event. The Christian reign of the Son of God, upon earth, seems but the tally and counterpart of the Saturnian golden age of heathen mythology. Well then might a special, matter of fact, illustration be wanted, to render the futurity of an event like this, both possible and probable: and such a document did the past fact of the transfiguration supply of the future one of the millennium, if the former was even then merely a proleptical adumbration of the latter.

The coming of Christ to the end of the world, or the general judgment, can scarcely with propriety be supposed that coming, for the truth of which St. Peter was necessitated to appeal to the testimony of the transfiguration. Is it conceivable, that the doctrine of a judgment to come, and of a state of rewards and punishments in another life, would be compared by a Christian apostle, to a cunningly devised fable? into the certainty of which doctrine the wisest and best of the heathen philosophers had all but penetrated by the light of reason; and in believing which the popular notion almost went along with the evangelical: a doctrine too, which as simply and plainly revealed in the New Testament, seems to our most sober and reasonable apprehensions, likely to be confounded with any thing rather than a cunning invention of fable. But the doctrine of a millennium in particular, like the fables of the poets with respect to their golden age, might naturally appear to have no foundation except in the imagina-

tion of its teachers; until demonstrated, by some proper evidence of its own, to be founded in truth and soberness.

The main design and topic of this second Epistle of St. Peter, are to confirm the belief of his converts in the future appearance and presence of Christ; and more especially, to guard against the danger of its being shaken, by the apparent delay in the time of its fulfilment. Hence, his attestation to the sure word of prophecy, as a light that being once kindled in a corner, however remote, and however dimly discernible at first, yet gradually grows brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day: as a scheme of revelation, not its own interpreter no more than its own teacher; but as much the word of God in the *mode* of its fulfilment, as in the *manner* of its delivery^y. Hence, also, his allusion to the rise of scoffers (ἐμπαϊκται,) in the latter days, mocking at the belief of this doctrine in particular, and saying, “Where is “the promise of his appearing and presence? for, “from the *day* that the fathers have fallen asleep, “all things continue since *the* beginning of crea- “tion, such *as they were*.” To whom he instructs his converts to reply, that God reckons not time as man does; but that “one day *is* with *the* Lord as a “thousand years, and a thousand years as one day:” nor is the Lord tardy in the performance of his promises, “as some account *it* tardiness,” but is patient and forbearing with us, “not wishing any to perish, “but all to come to repentance:” withholding the beginning of his judgments as long as possible, that so the more may repent, and be saved^a.

The same connexion between the transfiguration

^y Ch. i. 19—21.

^z Ch. iii. 3, 4.

^a Ch. iii. 8—10.

and his own future coming in his kingdom, is intimated by our Saviour's strict injunction to the apostles, to keep the fact of what they had seen a profound secret from all, until his resurrection from the dead; that is, in reality, until his ascension. They would know more of the time and circumstances of that coming then, than they did yet; and the knowledge, to be further communicated to them, enlightened as their minds would be by the Holy Ghost to the perception of all truth, would be safely to be entrusted to them, and could not be otherwise than discreetly applied. Besides, it was not until after his death and resurrection, that the return of Christ in a glorious kingdom, was to be expected at all. *Ought* not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory? Therefore it would not be, until after the same time, that the representation of things, as made at the transfiguration, could be said to be, or be intended to be, the personation of what had virtually an existence then, or would actually have at some future time. Had Christ not died, nor risen again, there never would have been any future coming in his glory: and consequently there never would have been any thing to which the transfiguration, as a type and emblem of something beyond itself, could properly apply.

Again, in the account of the celebration of the last supper, at the outset of the ceremony, and before the institution of either part of the eucharist^b, St. Luke represents our Lord as addressing his disciples thus:

Luke xxii. 15—18: "And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you,

^b Harm. P. iv. 83.

“ before I suffer : for I say unto you, that I will
 “ not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in
 “ the kingdom of God. And having taken a cup
 “ *and* given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide
 “ *it* unto yourselves ; for I say unto you, that I
 “ will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the
 “ kingdom of God be come.”

And in the course of the evening afterwards, at the time of the institution of the cup in the sacramental ordinance, a declaration like to this last in St. Luke, is found on record in St. Matthew and St. Mark also.

Matt. xxvi. 29 : “ But I say unto you, that I will
 “ not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until
 “ that day when I drink it with you, new, in the
 “ kingdom of my Father ^c.”

Upon which declaration, and upon that which concluded the extract from St. Luke, we may observe that, if in the ordinary construction of promises and assurances, such modes of speech as saying, I will not do so and so, until such and such a time arrives, or such and such a thing comes to pass, are equivalent to saying, I will do so and so, when it does ; it follows that by our Saviour’s pledging himself not to taste again of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God came, he must be understood to promise that he would taste of it again, when it did. This conclusion is further confirmed by the mention of *new* wine, to be drunk of by him when he should taste it again, in opposition, as is evident, to *old* wine, such as he had drunk of heretofore ; and *new* wine to be tasted by him in

^c Cf. Mark xiv. 25. Harm. P. iv. 89.

coujunction with the apostles, *then*, just as he had tasted of the *old*, in their company also, up to the present time.

It is not easy to say, what figurative or spiritual meaning can be put upon this mention of the *new* wine sometime to be drunk of again by our Saviour, along with his disciples, which it will not be equally necessary to put upon the sense even of the *old* wine, as drunk of hitherto, in opposition to the *new*. But if no symbolical meaning can justly be attached to either of these allusions, the future drinking of the fruit of the vine in company with the same persons, must be something as real as the present was: and therefore it is to be expected that Christ will again eat and drink, with his apostles, under some circumstances or other, in the kingdom of the Father, when it arrives. The most ancient of the fathers, as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, understood these assurances literally, and put no other construction upon them than we have done.

Between the times of the two declarations made to the apostles, thus considered, there was another, tending to raise a similar expectation of what was again to be done, sometime or other, by our Saviour and them, of which St. Luke gives this account^d.

Luke xxii. 28—30: “ But ye are *they* who have
 “ continued with me in my trials: and I appoint unto
 “ you, as the Father hath appointed unto me, a
 “ kingdom: that ye may eat and drink at my table
 “ in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the
 “ twelve tribes of Israel.”

Will Christ, then, indeed have a table to eat and

^d Harm. P. iv. 88.

to drink upon, in his kingdom? If he will, we may well believe in the literal import of his other declaration, that he should again drink of the fruit of the vine, at some proper time, along with the disciples. Surely, these declarations are all in unison with each other; and not without great violence and contradiction to the plain meaning of terms, to be otherwise than literally understood. A millenarian has no difficulty in comprehending even these in their literal sense, for that is entirely in harmony with his system; which is the future establishment of a kingdom of Christ's upon earth, agreeing in the outline with the present condition of things upon it, so far at least as to be a social state, and to exhibit the ordinary phenomena of a state of society transacted among such beings as men, with nothing supernatural or preternatural, to characterise it, except the absence of evil and imperfection.

And with respect to the first part of the passage recited from St. Luke, "With desire have I desired," &c.—St. Paul has taught us^e, that "as often as we eat of the eucharistic bread, or drink of the eucharistic cup, we do shew forth the Lord's death, until he come." Whence it may be inferred, that the design of the eucharistic institution being to commemorate the death of Christ, so long as he is absent, that design will have been completed, when he returns; and therefore that no such institution can, or will be, celebrated after his personal return, as was, and still is, celebrated, during his absence. We might collect then that the Christian eucharist is to cease with the return of Jesus Christ; but whether any other observance is to be substituted,

^e 1 Cor. xi. 26.

even then, in its stead, would not appear from the words of St. Paul.

But our Saviour has said, he should no more eat of the passover, such as he was then celebrating with his disciples, until it should be accomplished in the kingdom of God; which is equivalent to promising, that when it was so accomplished, he would eat of it again. His words then, do just as much appear to promise a revival of the ancient rite of the passover, or the institution of something analogous to it, after a certain time, as St. Paul's did, the cessation of the Christian eucharist, with the event of the return of Jesus Christ. As then the Jewish passover gave way to the Christian eucharist, at the departure of Christ, so will the Christian eucharist again give way to the Jewish passover, or to some new, but corresponding ceremony, at his return.

All this is consistent with the nature and circumstances of the millennarian scheme; which contemplates a state of social existence upon earth, to follow the return of Christ, and to be distinguished by laws and ordinances, both such as must characterise every state of social existence upon the earth in general, and such as may be expected to characterise such a state of existence, as that of the millennium in particular. What these are to be, time alone, of course, can shew. But it appears to me that no such intimations as these admit of being explained on the principles of any scheme, opposed to the millenary: especially on those of one which supposes the return of Christ in person to be followed immediately by the end of the world, and the commencement of the state of things in heaven. The observance, neither of the Christian eucharist nor of the

Jewish passover, nor of any rite analogous to either, we may be quite sure, can be characteristic of the state of things to be transacted in heaven.

Again, with respect to the question of honours or dignities in the kingdom of Christ, to be awarded to any, proportionably to their deserts, though subordinate to himself: it will perhaps occur to my reader, to remember the celebrated petition of the two sons of Zebedee^f, as furnishing an argument, upon this question, very much to the point.

In the first place, the time when that petition was addressed to our Lord, is not unimportant; being just when he had entered Judæa, out of Peræa, on his last progress to Jerusalem: at which juncture, in particular, as we know from other intimations, every body confidently expected that his kingdom was about to appear, and would be openly asserted and established, as soon as he arrived at Jerusalem.

In the next place, though the petition is substantially the same in the account given of it by each of the evangelists, yet there is some difference in the terms of it, as reported by them respectively. In St. Matthew it is, "Say that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left, in thy kingdom:" in St. Mark it is, "Grant us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and one on thy left, in thy glory." But St. Matthew ascribes the petition to Salome, the mother of James and John: St. Mark to her two sons, James and John. Doubtless they all three took a part in it alike, and both forms of application to our Lord were very probably used by them. But James and John had already seen the *glory* of Christ; viz. at his transfiguration:

^f Matt. xx. 20—28. Mark x. 35—45 Harm. P. iv. 56.

in their minds, therefore, the idea of his kingdom was strongly and inseparably associated with that of his *glory*. They asked consequently to sit on his right hand and on his left, in his *glory*. Their mother Salome had never witnessed any visible display of the glory of Christ, though she might often have heard of his kingdom. She asked therefore merely that her two sons might sit on his right hand and on his left, in his *kingdom*.

Thirdly, it seems almost superfluous to argue that they, who seriously thought of petitioning for such a thing as a seat on the right hand, or on the left of Christ, in his kingdom, or his glory, must have previously taken it for granted that there was to be a kingdom or glory of Christ; that there were to be honours and dignities in that kingdom in general; that there might be places of peculiar distinction in reserve for the apostles, in particular; and perhaps the highest of all, for themselves, could their Master be prevailed on to promise them to them. All this, I say, is implied in the very fact of their request.

What then was the reply of Jesus, to an application which involved such assumptions as these? Does he tell them, there was no such thing as the kingdom which they expected; no such thing as honours and dignities to be had in it, of any kind; much less, such places of peculiar distinction and eminence, as a seat on his right hand or on his left, in it; nothing in short, which could possibly tempt their ambition to covet, and aspire at, whether as disciples in general, or as apostles in particular? By no means. He tells them first of all, that they knew not what they were asking for. Were they able to drink of *his* cup, and to be baptized with *his*

baptism, that they were petitioning for a degree of honour and exaltation so like to his own, as a seat on his right hand and on his left ?

From which it appears, that when he told them they knew not what they were asking for, he did not intend that they had a false or erroneous notion of the thing itself, for which they were asking, but of the mode and conditions by which it was to be obtained. They were not ignorant of the high value of the good, which they were coveting; but they were so, as yet, of the price that must be paid to procure it. A share in the glory of Christ was to be obtained only by a participation in the sufferings of Christ; and if they aspired to sit on his right hand or on his left hereafter, they must be prepared to drink of his cup, and to be bathed in his baptism, first. This truth they did not as yet fully understand: had they been aware of it, they never could have thought of asking for that by way of grace or favour, which was to be procured only as the price of merit or desert, and such merit and desert as this.

After some further explanation on their part, our Lord concluded by telling them, that they should indeed taste of his sufferings, and so far, as he leaves it to implication, be intitled to partake in his glory: but, as to the particular object of their suit, the prerogative of sitting on his right hand and on his left, it was not his to *give*, it was theirs, for whom it was prepared of the Father §.

§ We find a reference to this request of the sons of Zebedee, and to the supposed appropriation of the highest places of distinction in the kingdom of Christ, to the most meritorious of his followers, who had attested their faith by martyrdom, in the following passages of the Pastor of Hermas; a very ancient

It is plainly admitted, then, at the end of this conversation, even by our Lord himself, that there was such a thing as a seat on his right hand and on his left, in his *glory*; that is, a degree of preeminence, second only to his own: that there were persons, for whom it was already in reserve, by the appointment of the Father; and so unalterably and inalienably in reserve, even then, that it was not Christ's to bestow or award it to them, no not as the delegate or representative of the Father, himself. Such at least is the inference, justly deducible from his last words, in both the evangelists; "But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to be given, but *theirs* for whom it is prepared by my Father." (Τὸ δὲ καθίται ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ ἐωνύμων μου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἡτοίμασται (as St. Matthew adds) ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου.) Had he intended to say, Except unto those, for whom it is prepared of my Father, every scholar is aware that such a sense would have required in the original, ἀλλ' ἡ οἷς ἡτοίμασται.

Again, when St. Paul in his first Epistle to the

Christian composition, and not to be called apocryphal, because actually the work of him whose name it bears.

Cogitante autem me, et mæsto consistente, quod non sivit me ad dexteram partem sedere, ait mihi: quid mæstus es, Herma? locus qui est ad dexteram, illorum est, qui jam meruerunt Deum, et passi sunt causa nominis ejus. tibi autem superest multum, ut cum illis sedeas. Hermæ Pastor, lib. i. Visio iii. cap. i. p. 38.

Again, Propter hoc, illorum sunt dextræ partes sanctitatis, et quisquis patiatu propter nomen Dei; reliquorum autem sinistrae partes sunt. sed utrisque eis, et qui ad dextram, et qui ad sinistram sedent, sunt dona et promissiones, tantum, quod ad dexteram sedentes habent gloriam quandam. Ibid. cap. ii.

Corinthians, which was produced partly by an application from the Corinthian church, for his advice and direction on certain points about which they were at a loss; and partly by the knowledge of some disorders and irregularities existing at Corinth, which he had learned from other quarters; was come to that part of his subject, which related to the decision of suits of law, between the brethren, that is, the members of the church and each other, he breaks out into the following apostrophe, 1 Cor. vi. 1—4: “Dare any of you, having an affair with another, be judged before the unjust, (the unbelieving,) and not before the saints? Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of judgments which are least? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? much more matters that pertain to *this* life. If then ye have judgments of matters pertaining to *this* life, set them to *preside* who are nothing accounted of in the church (*congregation.*”)

This is another of those luminous passages, which he that runneth may read, if he does not wilfully shut his eyes against the perception of the truth. It asserts in plain terms that *the saints shall judge the world*; that *the saints shall judge angels*: assurances, which the context shews cannot be understood of any but a literal judging, because the fact of this future judging, of which the saints should hereafter be deemed worthy, the nature and subjects whereof are of so exalted a character, is urged as the ground of an argument *a fortiori*, why they must be competent for the office of judging in the ordinary concerns of life, comparatively so low and mean.

Could they be unfit to judge between brother and brother, peradventure in some trifling matter, who should hereafter be found able to judge the world? Could they be unworthy to decide upon the controversies of common life, who should sometime sit in judgment on angels? What sort of judgment can be meant in the first of these cases, which must not be intended in the latter? with this difference merely, that while both are species of the same kind of judgment in general, the latter is infinitely the higher, infinitely the more dignified, of the two; and therefore supposes infinitely more fitness and ability in the persons, who are qualified to exercise it.

It is the doctrine of the advocates of the millennium that the saints will judge the world; it is also their belief that the saints will judge angels: the former, under the millenary reign itself, when the power and authority of Christ, as supreme, will nevertheless be divided with his saints, in a subordinate capacity, and in such proportions, as shall be most agreeable to their deserts; the latter, at the end of the world, when the general judgment takes place, and the rest of mankind are raised, who did not participate in the first resurrection. Our Saviour has taught us, in the prophecy upon mount Olivet, that the final condemnation of the Devil and his angels, will take place at the general judgment; and the saints, as well as the holy angels, being spectators of this final condemnation, as well as of the process of the general judgment, may so far be said to judge even angels, not less than men.

It contributes not a little to strengthen the argument from these texts, to observe how incidentally they come in, in the course of St. Paul's remon-

stances with the Corinthians; how entirely unpremeditated, how altogether by the way, the allusions to these facts, however extraordinary, are. Such modes of reference to points of belief, possessing so peculiar a character as these do, are the most convincing and satisfactory evidences of their truth: implying both in the mind of him who makes them, and of those to whom they are addressed, an habitual conviction of their reality, and a preestablished belief of their futurity; which has but to hint at its object, to be at once acknowledged and allowed. We may observe too, how the facts are alluded to by St. Paul as what the Corinthians had already been taught, and were already aware of in consequence of this teaching; which, however, they must have had orally from St. Paul, when he was personally present among them; for they are not to be found in any part of his teaching by letter, directly or indirectly, except in this one place of the Epistle to the Corinthians; where also they are referred to as something which was known already, and not communicated now for the first time. It is a just conclusion from this circumstance, that the apostles must have taught many things to their converts, by word of mouth, especially on the subject of Christ's future kingdom, which they did not think proper to commit to writing^h.

^h The opponents of the millenary doctrine sometimes attempt to elude the force of these texts, by construing *κρινουσιν* in one of them as the present, *κρίνονσι*, and not as the future. No such construction, however, can be put upon *κρινοῦμεν* in the other: and while *κρινοῦμεν* is future, *κρινουσι* cannot be present. Besides which, the tense in question, from the earliest times, has always been understood as future. The old Latin version

I will conclude my observations on this passage, by the following quotation from the Book of Wisdom; a work, which exhibits, in my opinion, internal evidences that it was written after the Gospel æra, and was probably the composition of some Christian. The writer is speaking of the future reward of the righteous.

Wisd. iii. 7, 8 : “ And in the time of their visitation
“ they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks
“ among the stubble. They shall judge among the
“ nations and have dominion over the people, and
“ their Lord shall reign for ever.”

It seems more natural to refer the latter of these allusions to St. Paul's 1 Cor. vi. 3; and the former to Matt. xiii. 43; than either of them to Psalm cxlix. 5—9: which though it speaks of the saints executing vengeance, says nothing of their judging as such, or having dominion over the people.

Again, I have already produced from St. Luke that passage, which while it spoke of Christ's appointing, bequeathing, or devising to the apostles a kingdom, even as the Father had done unto him; and of their eating and drinking at his table in his kingdom; spoke also of their sitting upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This promise

of the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, which is all that is extant of the latter part of it, translates the text, *An nescimus, quia sancti mundum judicabunt* *? It is quoted as future by Clemens Alexandrinus †; by Chrysostom, in a multitude of passages ‡; by Sulpicius Severus ||, &c.

* Cap. xi. PP. Apost. 1013. A.

† II. 883. 31. Strom. vii. 14.

‡ VI. 661. C: in secundum Domini adventum. Comm. in Nov. Test. iv. 397. B. in Ep. ad Rom. Hom. xxxi. v. 166. C. in 1 ad Cor. Hom. xvi. &c.

|| Dialog. iii. 6.

so made to the twelve, at the time of the celebration of the last supper, was but the repetition of an assurance, first given to them a week beforeⁱ; of which this is St. Matthew's account.

Matt. xix. 27, 28: "Then answered Peter and
" said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all
" *things*, and followed thee: what then shall be
" ours? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say
" unto you, that ye, who have followed me, shall, in
" the regeneration, when the Son of man sits on his
" throne of glory, sit, even ye, on twelve thrones,
" judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

In estimating the precise meaning of this assurance, regard must be had to the circumstances of the time and occasion, under which it took place. Jesus had just been accosted by the rich young ruler, with the question, What should he do, to inherit eternal life^k. The turn which that conversation took, led to his making the well known declaration, That the rich should hardly enter into the kingdom of God; that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

It was plainly to be understood from this, that the rich would have so much reluctance to part with their temporal possessions in this life, were such a sacrifice to be required of them for the sake of the Gospel, that scarce any consideration of the return proposed to that sacrifice in another life, should be powerful enough to induce them to make it. The question then turned upon this point; how far the sacrifice of temporal good, in the present world, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, was so certainly en-

ⁱ Harm. P. iv. 53.

^k Harm. P. iv. 52.

titled to a return in the next world, and to an ample and plenary return, that men ought not to hesitate to make it. St. Peter observes in his own name, and in that of his fellow disciples, Lo, we have forsaken all things! we have already made the utmost sacrifice of temporal possessions that was in our power, and followed thee! what then shall be ours? what may *we* expect in return? The answer to such a question could not fail to be the reciprocal of the demand; and to specify the return to be expected for the sacrifice, as plainly as the demand had done, the fact of the sacrifice.

Nor is this all; for the question was not simply whether the sacrifice of temporal good, for the sake of the Gospel, was entitled to a return, but to a return in kind. This may be collected both from the *animus* of St. Peter, who was speaking only of the sacrifice of temporal good, and expecting only to hear of a corresponding return; and from the answer of our Lord himself, if not that part of it, which applied directly to the apostles, yet that which followed on it, and was of a more general character. Of this, take St. Mark's account, x. 29, 30: "There
" is no one, who hath forsaken an house, or brethren,
" or sisters, or a father, or a mother, or a wife, or
" children, or lands, for the sake of me and of the
" Gospel, but who shall receive an hundredfold now
" in this season, houses, and brethren, and sisters,
" and mothers, and children, and lands, *together*
" with persecutions, and in the period of ages which
" is coming, everlasting life¹."

The sacrifices here specified are all of a temporal nature, and the returns promised to them are all of

¹ Cf. Matt. xix. 29. Luke xviii. 29, 30.

a similar description ; one the ἀντίστοιχον or counterpart of the other ; both as belonging to the same genus, but the one exceeding the other in measure and degree ; the thing to be sacrificed being something limited and definite, the thing to be returned being the same thing without limit and without measure. On the same principle, the former part of the answer, or that which applies expressly to the apostles, while it specifies the precise return which should be made to them, for the precise sacrifice which they had made for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, must specify some return of the sacrifice in kind : so that, if temporal good was in some respect or other the thing sacrificed, temporal good also, in some sense or other, must be the thing to be expected in return.

In each of the evangelists, who record this transaction, St. Peter is the person who puts the question : but in St. Matthew only is that part of our Saviour's answer to it recorded, which applies directly to the apostles. We may account for St. Luke's omission of this part of the answer, on the principle of his usual rule, not to record the same thing in his Gospel twice. Now a declaration very similar to this came over again, as we have seen, a week afterwards, as one of the circumstances at the last supper ; which the other two evangelists had both omitted : and therefore it might very properly be recorded by him. In this case, he would naturally pass over what was said, to the same effect, on the former occasion.

St. Mark's omission of it, however, is very remarkable ; and can be explained only on the admission of the commonly received opinion, that his

Gospel is virtually St. Peter's, and contains nothing but what St. Peter thought proper it should. Now an answer, returned to a question put by St. Peter, which question desired to know what return in kind he and his fellow apostles might hope to receive, for sacrifices already made in kind, might very possibly be suppressed by St. Peter; especially if the return itself was something so splendid and magnificent, and so incomparably beyond the sacrifice in degree, however much it might resemble it in kind, as it appears to have been.

That St. Mark purposely omitted this part of the answer, may be inferred from his omitting also that part of the previous question, What, then, shall be ours? (*τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν*;) which, had it been specified, must have been followed by the proper answer, such as St. Matthew relates; or if it was not, would have led to a false conclusion; viz. that the assurance of the general return in kind to be made in another life, for every sacrifice of temporal good, made for the sake of the Gospel, by any soever in this life, which does follow in St. Mark's account, involved the particular or special return which was promised exclusively to the apostles, for the sacrifices exclusively made by them. St. Luke too omits this part of the question, no doubt for the same reason as St. Mark; viz. that he did not intend to record the proper answer to it here, and he would not premise it to the answer which he does record, because that was not the proper answer to this part of the question in particular.

St. Peter, then, we may presume, felt that the proper answer returned to the question put by himself, conveyed a personal assurance to himself and

his fellow apostles, of a reward in kind for sacrifices in kind, too grand and illustrious to be prominently recorded in a Gospel, dictated by himself. No such motive would operate to produce the omission of it in the Gospel of St. Matthew also; though he likewise was an apostle, and as such was personally concerned in the reply. But he was not personally concerned in the question; that is, he did not originate the question. And not being personally concerned in the reply, except in its general sense and application, there was no reason why he might not record both the question and its answer, as matter of general history. St. Luke records the second instance of the same kind of personal assurance to the apostles, as matter of general history also. Nor, was this a prediction, however specially concerning the apostles, yet some time or other to be literally fulfilled—will any one say that it was not both fitting and necessary, that it should previously be placed on record.

Let us consider then the terms of this memorable prophecy.

“ In the *παλιγγενεσία* ”—the regeneration—the making of things anew, or the becoming of things new—Scripture informs us of no regeneration, no new creation, no making or becoming of things new, except after the general judgment, and the consummation of all things—and as the millennarians believe, with the commencement of the millenary dispensation.

“ When the Son of man sits on his throne of “glory”—The Son of man is never spoken of as sitting, or to sit, on his throne of glory, except at his coming to the general judgment at the end

of the world; or as the millennarians construe a variety of passages, at his open assumption upon earth of regal power, pomp, and state, worthy of the incarnate divinity, before and during the millennium.

“Ye shall sit, even ye, upon twelve thrones, “judging the twelve tribes of Israel”—The number of the apostles was *twelve*; the number of the tribes was *twelve*; the number of thrones is *twelve* also. Will any one say, that these things are not critically adapted to each other; that each apostle as a judge has one throne, for the seat or insigne of judgment; and one tribe, for the province or subject of his jurisdiction; and both, concurrently with the session of the Son of man, upon his throne of glory, ruling over all as Supreme?

When Christ shall sit down on his throne of glory, at the end of the world, and for the general judgment, no one, that we know of, will then sit down with him in any concurrent jurisdiction, though subordinate to his. It is the peculiar and exclusive prerogative of the Son, that *all* judgment is committed to him; because *he* is both God and man^m. But St. Paul has taught us, in the passage from 1 Cor. vi. that the saints will judge the world; and the advocates of the millennium believe that while, during the continuance of that dispensation, Jesus Christ will rule over all as Sovereign of his kingdom, yet certain subordinate jurisdictions of power and trust will be committed to others beneath him.

When the Son of man shall return to judgment, and sit on his throne of glory upon that occasion; Scripture informs us that *all nations* are to be

^m John v. 22.

gathered together before him; it says nothing of the twelve tribes of Israel in particular. But the millennialians believe that the twelve tribes will yet be restored to their country, and will be living there during the millenary dispensation: and that too, without any prejudice to the possible incorporation of Gentiles as such, in the bosom of the same œconomy. The millennialians, then, conceive it to be possible, that, when Christ is seated on his own throne of glory, as supreme King of all, both Jews and Gentiles, the subjects of his happy reign; as there may be tribes to govern, so there may be appropriate governors to be appointed over them; who, upon the strength of our Saviour's assurance, they have no difficulty in believing, will be the twelve apostles: whatever may be done for the government of the Gentiles as such.

Let us now turn to Rev. xx. 3, 4, which describes the commencement and continuance of the millenary dispensation itself.

“And I saw thrones; and they sate upon them; and judgment was given unto them. . . . And they lived, and reigned *together* with Christ for the thousand years.”

What thrones were these, which St. John saw? who were they, that sate upon them? and what judgment was it, that was given unto them? He furnishes no answer to these questions, further than this; that as they lived and reigned with Christ for the thousand years, their thrones must have been the insignia of regal power and state; they who sate upon them, must have been kings, or representatives of kings; the judgment given unto them, must have been the authority and jurisdiction com-

mitted to governors over subjects: and as all this was going on, in their case, along with, and in conjunction with, the reign of Christ, it must have gone on, of course, along with, though subordinate to, his jurisdiction as supreme. Can we desire a better comment upon the nature of the prophetic promise of our Lord to his twelve disciples, than what is supplied by this description in Revelation, which may so obviously be referred to its literal fulfilment? that promise, which said to them, that when Christ himself should sit upon *his* throne, they also should sit upon *their* thrones: when all power should be assumed and exercised by him as Supreme and as Lord of all, a subordinate trust and authority should still be committed to them.

Lastly—that we may produce some probable testimony from the Old Testament to this part of our subject also, let us compare Dan. xi. 12, 13.

“Blessed *is* he that waiteth and cometh to the
 “thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.
 “But go thou thy way, till the end *be*: for thou shalt
 “rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

We may see reason to conclude from this passage, that a peculiar *lot* or *portion* awaits each of the saints, at some proper time; and will then be bestowed upon them. The time of the end, in the prophecies of Daniel, is the close of the great anti-christian contest; and the same period, in the opinion of the millennarians, is also the beginning of the millenary œconomy.

With regard to the last member of our sixth proposition; a resulting state of things, which though adapted to a society strictly human, and to an œconomy transacted upon earth, leaves nothing to

be desired unto its perfection and happiness; we may observe, in the first place, that it is ushered in, in the book of Revelation, by the confinement and coercion of Satanⁿ, that is, of the principal agent in the production of evil; which confinement and coercion of the author of evil last as long as the continuance of the millennium itself. Now whether the binding and confinement of the power of evil be literal or figurative in itself, the thing implied by its coercion is equally the same; viz. that, while it continues, as there is no such cause at large to operate in the production of evil, as before, no such evil can be produced, or have a being, as before. The result, then, of such a constitution of things must be, to retain the good, with none of the evil, of the present state of things upon the earth. Nor is there any reason to suppose but that, while the preexisting evil of the present state is all removed, the preexisting good may not only remain as before, unmixed and unalloyed with evil, and so far refined and purified from that which at present adulterates and debases it, but withal be enhanced and augmented to the utmost degree of perfection, of which in its own nature it may be capable.

Our Saviour has called the millenary state of things, the *παλιγγενεσία*,—or generation of things anew; no doubt, as we may justly presume, from this circumstance of its nature, that with none of the alloy and imperfection of the old, or present state of things, it retains all the good, wonderfully increased in degree and intensity, if not equally diversified in kind. Were such a change to take place at once before our eyes, in the present state of things upon

ⁿ Chap. xx. 1, 2, 3, 7.

earth, we should say, it would be to the world, what would be the case with a man, could he enter a second time into his mother's womb, when old, and be born again. It would be the freshness, the beauty, the vigour of youth, superinduced on the decay, the deformity, the decrepitude of age. The subject would remain the same; the attributes only, and properties of it, would be distinct. The mystical bird of poesy, which never dies, but springs up in newness of life and vigour, the same as before, from the ashes of its funeral pile; is a type of the world, regenerated at the millennium. The name of a regeneration is strictly applicable to it. There will be no other difference between the former state of things, and the millenary, than between what *was* ruinous, and what *is* repaired; what *was* decayed and mutilated, and what *is* fresh and entire; what *was* once imperfect, and what *is* now perfect of its kind; what *was* old and long past its prime, and what *is* young again, or in its maturity. If the man who is now old, is the same who once was young; then will the world, howsoever regenerated and remade at the millennium, be still the same world, which once was unregenerate, and unconformed, as yet to any different model from the present.

The state of things under the millennium is described in the parables, as the celebration of a great supper; as the consummation of a nuptial solemnity: both, beyond a question, social images, and both of a nature, the most joyous and festive, among all that society furnishes.

It is destined to be nothing less than a heaven transacted upon earth; that is, a scheme and œconomy, which though in their local bounds necessarily

confined to the earth, are yet intimately connected with heaven; are characterised by the closest communion and intercourse with heaven.

In proof of this assertion, I would adduce our Lord's assurance to Nathanael, John i. 50, 51ⁿ. "Jesus answered, and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater *things* than these." (Ἀμὴν, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν· ἀπ' ἄρτι ἄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεφύγῳτα, καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας, καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου).

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that we have in these words a reference to the dream of Jacob, and to the ladder, represented therein, between the heaven and the earth, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it^o. Nor is it necessary to tell him, that the final end of such a representation must be to symbolize the truth of a constant and familiar intercourse between heaven and earth, carried on by the angels in their instrumental capacity of ministering spirits.

If we render the last words of our Saviour exactly, they imply that such an intercourse was sometime to be carried on between heaven, and the Son of man, as such, upon earth. "Verily, verily I say unto you; hereafter ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God going up, and coming down to the Son of man:" whence it is an obvious inference, that if they were to come down to the Son of man, he himself must be on earth; and if they were to go up, it must be to some one in heaven: consequently, as we may presume, the intercourse so carried on by the instrumentality of the angels, is be-

ⁿ Harm P. ii. 10.

^o Gen. xxviii. 12.

tween Christ, as the Son of man, upon earth, and the Father, as God, in heaven.

Now this, it is said, should sometime or other pass visibly before the eyes of Nathanael, and of the others addressed on this occasion, one of whom was Philip, and others probably were Peter, and Andrew, and John the evangelist. I say, sometime or other: for as to the precise meaning of the terms, ἀπ' ἄρτι, (*from now, from henceforth*,) it is no more to be literally taken into account, here, than at Matt. xxvi. 64. or than, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (*from now*,) at Luke xxii. 69. When, then, I would ask, was the fact of this intercourse between the Son on the earth, and the Father in heaven, as kept up and carried on by the instrumentality of the regular order of ministering spirits—when was it revealed to the eyes of the parties now present; or to the eyes of any other human spectator, before our Lord's departure into heaven, when he ceased to be present upon earth?

Was it, when the angels ministered to him in the desert, after the temptation? But he was then alone; and besides, that instance of their waiting upon him was over, before these words were spoken. Was it, when an angel appeared, strengthening him in the garden of Gethsemane, under his agony? But only three of the apostles were witnesses of that appearance. Was it, when the two angels descended on the morning of the resurrection? But none of the apostles saw them. Was it, when the two angels appeared to the twelve, on mount Olivet, immediately after the ascension? But Jesus himself was no longer then upon the earth.

If it was upon none of these occasions, that any such open, familiar, and regular intercourse between

heaven and earth, can be said to have taken place, as is necessarily implied in the description of the angels of God going up, and coming down to the Son of man; it never took place, and never could have been witnessed by any, even the most favoured of the followers of our Lord, during his personal continuance upon earth. If then, it is ever to take place, and ever to be witnessed by them, it must be hereafter, and it may be, or rather it will be, under the millennium; when Christ personally reigning upon earth, and though endued with all power, yet solely as the delegate or representative of the Father, reason is, we should expect to see a constant communication between the Father in heaven and the Son upon earth; of which communication, if carried on perceptibly to the eyes of sense, the angels will doubtless be the medium.

If we turn to the description of the state of things upon earth, during the millenary œconomy, in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which the advocates of that œconomy construe in reference to it, we meet with predictions of changes, affecting the face of external nature, and of changes affecting the instincts of animals, the literal accomplishment of which tends directly to the removal of physical or natural evil. For example,

Isaiah xxxii. 14, 15: “ Because the palaces shall
“ be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be
“ left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for
“ ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

“ Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high,
“ and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruit-
“ ful field be counted for a forest.”

Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2: “ The wilderness and the soli-

“ tary place shall be glad for them; and the desert
 “ shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

“ It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even
 “ with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall
 “ be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and
 “ Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and*
 “ the excellency of our God.”

Ibid. 6, 7: “ Then shall the lame *man* leap as an
 “ hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the
 “ wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in
 “ the desert.

“ And the parched ground shall become a pool,
 “ and the thirsty land springs of water: in the ha-
 “ bitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass
 “ with reeds and rushes.”

Isaiah xli. 18, 19: “ I will open rivers in high
 “ places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys:
 “ I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and
 “ the dry land springs of water.

“ I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the
 “ shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I
 “ will set in the desert the fir tree, *and* the pine,
 “ and the box tree together.”

Isaiah xliii. 19, 20: “ Behold, I will do a new
 “ thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not
 “ know it? I will even make a way in the wilder-
 “ ness, *and* rivers in the desert.

“ The beast of the field shall honour me, the
 “ dragons and the owls: because I give waters in
 “ the wilderness, *and* rivers in the desert, to give
 “ drink to my people, my chosen.”

Isaiah li. 3: “ For the LORD shall comfort Zion:
 “ he will comfort all her waste places; and he will
 “ make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like

“ the garden of the LORD ; joy and gladness shall
 “ be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of
 “ melody.”

Isaiah lv. 13 : “ Instead of the thorn shall come
 “ up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come
 “ up the myrtle tree : and it shall be to the LORD
 “ for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not
 “ be cut off^p.”

Isaiah xi. 6—8 : “ The wolf also shall dwell with
 “ the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the
 “ kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fat-
 “ ling together ; and a little child shall lead them.

“ And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their
 “ young ones shall lie down together : and the lion
 “ shall eat straw like the ox.

“ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of
 “ the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand
 “ on the cockatrice’ den.”

Isaiah xxxv. 9 : “ No lion shall be there, nor *any*
 “ ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be
 “ found there ; but the redeemed shall walk *there*.”

Isaiah lxxv. 25 : “ The wolf and the lamb shall
 “ feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the
 “ bullock : and dust *shall be* the serpent’s meat.
 “ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy
 “ mountain, saith the LORD.”

Hosea ii. 18 : “ And in that day will I make a
 “ covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and
 “ with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping
 “ things of the ground : and I will break the bow
 “ and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and
 “ will make them to lie down safely.”

^p Cf. Psalm cvii. 34, 35. Baruch v. 7, 8.

We meet with predictions, affecting the luminaries of heaven, and promising an increase of their glory and splendour. Thus,

Isaiah xxx. 26: "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound ⁹."

We meet with the prediction of changes, affecting the hearts and dispositions of men, so as no longer to be capable of sin, or of displeasing God by disobedience; no longer to be capable of war, strife, discord, or the like.

Isaiah li. 4: "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people."

Isaiah liv. 13, 14: "And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and great *shall be* the peace of thy children.

"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee."

Isaiah lix. 20, 21: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

"As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of

⁹ Cf. xxiv. 23: lx. 19, 20.

“ thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed,
“ saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.”

Isaiah lx. 21: “ Thy people also *shall be* all
“ righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the
“ branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
“ that I may be glorified.”

Jeremiah iii. 15—19: “ And I will give you
“ pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed
“ you with knowledge and understanding.

“ And it shall come to pass, when ye be multi-
“ plied and increased in the land, in those days,
“ saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark
“ of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come
“ to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither
“ shall they visit *it*; neither shall *that* be done any
“ more.

“ At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne
“ of the LORD; and all the nations shall be ga-
“ thered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jeru-
“ salem: neither shall they walk any more after the
“ imagination of their evil heart.

“ In those days the house of Judah shall walk
“ with the house of Israel, and they shall come to-
“ gether out of the land of the north to the land
“ that I have given for an inheritance unto your
“ fathers.

“ But I said, How shall I put thee among the
“ children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly
“ heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou
“ shalt call me, MY Father; and shalt not turn
“ away from me.”

Jer. xxxi. 31—34: “ Behold, the days come, saith
“ the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with

“ the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah :

“ Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD :

“ But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Jer. xxxii. 39, 40 : “ And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them :

“ And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

Ezekiel xi. 19, 20 : “ And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh :

“ That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them : and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

Ezekiel xxxvi. 25—27 : “ Then will I sprinkle
“ clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from
“ all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I
“ cleanse you.

“ A new heart also will I give you, and a new
“ spirit will I put within you : and I will take away
“ the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give
“ you an heart of flesh.

“ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause
“ you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my
“ judgments, and do *them*.”

Zephaniah iii. 9 : “ For then will I turn to the
“ people a pure language, that they may all call
“ upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with
“ one consent.”

Ibid. 12, 13 : “ I will also leave in the midst of
“ thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall
“ trust in the name of the LORD.

“ The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor
“ speak lies ; neither shall a deceitful tongue be
“ found in their mouth : for they shall feed and lie
“ down, and none shall make *them* afraid.”

Malachi iii. 3, 4 : “ And he shall sit *as* a refiner
“ and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the
“ sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver,
“ that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in
“ righteousness.

“ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
“ be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old,
“ and as in former years.”

Ibid. 17, 18 : “ And they shall be mine, saith the
“ LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my

“ jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth
 “ his own son that serveth him.

“ Then shall ye return, and discern between the
 “ righteous and the wicked, between him that serv-
 “ eth God and him that serveth him not.”

Psalm lxxxv. 9—11 : “ Surely his salvation *is*
 “ nigh them that fear him ; that glory may dwell
 “ in our land.

“ Mercy and truth are met together ; righteous-
 “ ness and peace have kissed *each other*.

“ Truth shall spring out of the earth ; and right-
 “ ousness shall look down *from* heaven.”

Isaiah ii. 4 : “ And he shall judge among the na-
 “ tions, and shall rebuke many people : and they
 “ shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their
 “ spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not lift
 “ up sword against nation, neither shall they learn
 “ war any more.”

Isaiah xi. 9, 13 : “ They shall not hurt nor de-
 “ stroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth
 “ shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the
 “ waters cover the sea.

“ The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the
 “ adversaries of Judah shall be cut off : Ephraim
 “ shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex
 “ Ephraim.”

Isaiah lx. 18 : “ Violence shall no more be heard
 “ in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy
 “ borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
 “ and thy gates Praise.”

Micah iv. 3 : “ And he shall judge among many

“ people, and rebuke strong nations afar off ; and
“ they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and
“ their spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not
“ lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they
“ learn war any more.”

Psalm xlvi. 8, 9 : “ Come, behold the works of
“ the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the
“ earth.

“ He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the
“ earth ; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear
“ in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”

We meet with predictions which promise every conceivable good, both negative and positive, of a temporal kind ; in the absence of fear, sorrow, distress, and trouble ; in the presence of peace, security, plenty, and prosperity ; which, if they are to be literally construed, imply the cessation both of all moral and all physical evil, during their continuance, and a state of things which must be the perfection of human social existence upon earth.

Isaiah iv. 5, 6 : “ And the LORD will create upon
“ every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her
“ assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the
“ shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all
“ the glory *shall be* a defence.

“ And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in
“ the daytime from the heat, and for a place of re-
“ fuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.”

Isaiah xxv. 6, 8 : “ And in this mountain shall
“ the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of
“ fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things
“ full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

“ He will swallow up death in victory ; and the

“ LORD GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces ;
“ and the rebuke of his people shall he take away
“ from off all the earth : for the LORD hath spoken
“ it.”

Isaiah xxx. 19 : “ For the people shall dwell in
“ Zion at Jerusalem : thou shalt weep no more : he
“ will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy
“ cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.”

Isaiah xxxii. 15—19 : “ Until the Spirit be poured
“ upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a
“ fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for
“ a forest.

“ Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness,
“ and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

“ And the work of righteousness shall be peace ;
“ and the effect of righteousness quietness and as-
“ surance for ever.

“ And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habi-
“ tation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting
“ places ;

“ When it shall hail, coming down on the forest ;
“ and the city shall be low in a low place.”

Isaiah xxxiii. 20—22 : “ Look upon Zion, the city
“ of our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem
“ a quiet habitation, a tabernacle *that* shall not be
“ taken down ; not one of the stakes thereof shall
“ ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords
“ thereof be broken.

“ But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a
“ place of broad rivers *and* streams ; wherein shall
“ go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship
“ pass thereby.

“ For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our
“ lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king ; he will save us.”

Isaiah xlix. 9, 10 : “ That thou mayest say to the
 “ prisoners, Go forth ; to them that *are* in darkness,
 “ Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and
 “ their pastures *shall be* in all high places.

“ They shall not hunger nor thirst ; neither shall
 “ the heat nor sun smite them : for he that hath
 “ mercy on them shall lead them, even by the
 “ springs of water shall he guide them.”

Isaiah li. 11 : “ Therefore the redeemed of the
 “ LORD shall return, and come with singing unto
 “ Zion ; and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their
 “ head : they shall obtain gladness and joy ; *and*
 “ sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

Isaiah liv. 13. 17 : “ And all thy children *shall*
 “ *be* taught of the LORD ; and great *shall be* the
 “ peace of thy children.

“ No weapon that is formed against thee shall
 “ prosper ; and every tongue *that* shall rise against
 “ thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. *This is*
 “ the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and
 “ their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.”

Isaiah lxii. 8, 9 : “ The LORD hath sworn by his
 “ right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely
 “ I will no more give thy corn *to be* meat for thine
 “ enemies ; and the sons of the stranger shall not
 “ drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured :

“ But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and
 “ praise the LORD ; and they that have brought it
 “ together shall drink it in the courts of my holi-
 “ ness.”

Isaiah lxxv. 17—25 : “ For, behold, I create new
 “ heavens and a new earth : and the former shall
 “ not be remembered, nor come into mind.

“ But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which

“ I create : for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

“ And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

“ There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days : for the child shall die an hundred years old ; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

“ And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them* ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

“ They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

“ They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble ; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

“ And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

“ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock : and dust *shall be* the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain saith the LORD.”

Jeremiah xxiii. 3—6 : “ And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds ; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

“ And I will set up shepherds over them which
“ shall feed them : and they shall fear no more,
“ nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking,
“ saith the LORD.

“ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I
“ will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a
“ King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute
“ judgment and justice in the earth.

“ In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel
“ shall dwell safely : and this *is* his name whereby
“ he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUS-
“ NESS.”

Jeremiah xxxi. 12—14 : “ Therefore they shall
“ come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall
“ flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for
“ wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young
“ of the flock and of the herd : and their soul shall
“ be as a watered garden ; and they shall not sorrow
“ any more at all.

“ Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both
“ young men and old together : for I will turn their
“ mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and
“ make them rejoice from their sorrow.

“ And I will satiate the soul of the priests with
“ fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my
“ goodness, saith the LORD.”

Ezekiel xxviii. 24—26 : “ And there shall be no
“ more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel,
“ nor *any* grieving thorn of all *that are* round about
“ them, that despised them ; and they shall know
“ that I *am* the Lord GOD.

“ Thus saith the Lord GOD ; When I shall have
“ gathered the house of Israel from the people

“ among whom they are scattered, and shall be
 “ sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then
 “ shall they dwell in their land that I have given
 “ to my servant Jacob.

“ And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall
 “ build houses, and plant vineyards ; yea, they shall
 “ dwell with confidence, when I have executed judg-
 “ ments upon all those that despise them round
 “ about them ; and they shall know that I *am* the
 “ LORD their God.”

Ezekiel xxxiv. 11—16: “ For thus saith the
 “ Lord GOD ; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search
 “ my sheep, and seek them out.

“ As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day
 “ that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered ; so
 “ will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them
 “ out of all places where they have been scattered
 “ in the cloudy and dark day.

“ And I will bring them out from the people, and
 “ gather them from the countries, and will bring
 “ them to their own land, and feed them upon the
 “ mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the
 “ inhabited places of the country.

“ I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon
 “ the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be :
 “ there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pas-
 “ ture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

“ I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to
 “ lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

“ I will seek that which was lost, and bring again
 “ that which was driven away, and will bind up
 “ *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that
 “ which was sick : but I will destroy the fat and
 “ the strong ; I will feed them with judgment.”

Ezek. xxxiv. 23—31: “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

“And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*.

“And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

“And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

“And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

“And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make *them* afraid.

“And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

“Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord GOD.

“And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, and I *am* your God, saith the Lord GOD.”

Hosea ii. 21, 22: “ And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth ;

“ And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel.”

Joel iii. 18: “ And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”

Amos ix. 13—15: “ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

“ And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them* ; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

“ And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.”

Micah iv. 4: “ But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make *them* afraid : for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*.”

Micah v. 4: “ And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name

“ of the LORD his God ; and they shall abide : for
 “ now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”

Micah vii. 14 : “ Feed thy people with thy rod,
 “ the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily
 “ *in* the wood, in the midst of Carmel : let them
 “ feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.”

Zephaniah iii. 15 : “ The LORD hath taken away
 “ thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy : the
 “ king of Israel, *even* the LORD, *is* in the midst of
 “ thee : thou shalt not see evil any more.”

Zechariah iii. 10 : “ In that day, saith the LORD
 “ of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour
 “ under the vine and under the fig tree.”

Zechariah ix. 10, 17 : “ And I will cut off the
 “ chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jeru-
 “ salem, and the battle bow shall be cut off : and he
 “ shall speak peace unto the heathen : and his do-
 “ minion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the
 “ river *even* to the ends of the earth.

“ For how great *is* his goodness, and how great
 “ *is* his beauty ! corn shall make the young men
 “ cheerful, and new wine the maids.”

Zechariah xiv. 11 : “ And *men* shall dwell in it,
 “ and there shall be no more utter destruction ; but
 “ Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”

Psalm xxxvi. 5—10 : “ Thy mercy, O LORD, *is*
 “ in the heavens ; *and* thy faithfulness *reacheth*
 “ unto the clouds.

“ Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains ;
 “ thy judgments *are* a great deep : O LORD, thou
 “ preservest man and beast.

“ How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God !
 “ therefore the children of men put their trust under
 “ the shadow of thy wings.

“ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fat-
 “ ness of thy house ; and thou shalt make them
 “ drink of the river of thy pleasures.

“ For with thee *is* the fountain of life : in thy
 “ light shall we see light.

“ O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that
 “ know thee ; and thy righteousness to the upright
 “ in heart.”

Psalm lxxv. 9—13 : “ Thou visitest the earth, and
 “ waterest it : thou greatly enrichest it with the
 “ river of God, *which* is full of water : thou pre-
 “ parest them corn, when thou hast so provided
 “ for it.

“ Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly :
 “ thou settlest the furrows thereof : thou makest it
 “ soft with showers : thou blessest the springing
 “ thereof.

“ Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ;
 “ and thy paths drop fatness.

“ They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness :
 “ and the little hills rejoice on every side.

“ The pastures are clothed with flocks ; the val-
 “ leys also are covered over with corn ; they shout
 “ for joy, they also sing.”

Psalm lxxii. 2—7 : “ He shall judge thy people
 “ with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

“ The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
 “ and the little hills, by righteousness.

“ He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall
 “ save the children of the needy, and shall break in
 “ pieces the oppressor.

“ They shall fear thee as long as the sun and
“ moon endure, throughout all generations.

“ He shall come down like rain upon the mown
“ grass : as showers *that* water the earth.

“ In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and
“ abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.”

Psalm lxxii. 12—14 : “ For he shall deliver the
“ needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and *him*
“ that hath no helper.

“ He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall
“ save the souls of the needy.

“ He shall redeem their souls from deceit and
“ violence : and precious shall their blood be in his
“ sight.”

Ibid. 16 : “ There shall be an handful of corn in
“ the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit
“ thereof shall shake like Lebanon : and *they* of the
“ city shall flourish like grass of the earth ^r.”

These splendid and magnificent promises of temporal happiness, of peace, security, prosperity ; this description of a state of things, among the people of God, in which all shall be innocence and all shall be harmony, both in the natural and the moral world ; where there shall be neither sin, nor sorrow ; neither privation, nor suffering ; no fear any longer of alienating the favour and protection of God, because no danger of displeasing him by disobedience and unrighteousness ; these promises, I say, have never yet been realized in such a manner as answers to the truth and plainness of the promises themselves : and therefore if they are still to be verified, upon this earth in particular, where alone it is supposed

^r Cf. also Luke i. 68—75. in the song of Zacharias. Harm. P. i. 7.

that they are all to be fulfilled, it must be in some future state of human society, some appointment and constitution both of the physical and the moral world, as different from any thing which has yet been witnessed among mankind, as heaven is distinct from earth; or as the happiness and perfection of paradise must have been different from the actual world of evil and misery, which has existed since the fall.

I have thus gone through almost all the scriptural proofs, supplied by the New Testament in particular, on which the advocates of the millennium are content to rest the probable truth of their expectations, as summed up in the several propositions above discussed. Of the arguments supplied by the Old Testament, it is right to observe, that I have produced but a small part, in comparison with all that might in my opinion have been cited, as relating to the same topic. And of those which are furnished by the New, I have purposely abstained from making any considerable use of the testimony of the book of Revelation: because, if the same conclusions could be made out, independent of that book, it was so much the more satisfactory a result. The testimony of the book of Revelation might perhaps have been objected to, when urged by itself; but it may be allowed its due weight, if brought in to corroborate and support what has been presumptively established by the evidence of other parts of Scripture. A witness, whose testimony might possibly be excepted against, if he stood alone, may be permitted to depose in attestation and confirmation of what is otherwise shewn to be antecedently probable. And certainly the harmony of the book of Revela-

tion, (mystical and allegorical as it may seem in some respects,) with those parts of the Gospels or Epistles which have come under our examination, in speaking one and the same language on the subject of the millenary dispensation, must be confessed to be truly singular and complete.

I have also abstained from making use of the testimony of such of the parables, as I specified at the outset of this inquiry, to be, in all probability, intimately connected with the subject of the same dispensation: for that would have been to anticipate their discussion, which will follow more properly hereafter. For the same reason, I have passed over in the preceding review of Scripture testimonies to the millennium, some passages in the Gospels, which might have been cited among the rest: because I have had occasion to consider them more particularly in treating of the parables.

There is still, however, a passage of the Gospels, as well known and familiar to every Christian reader, as any thing contained therein, which might have been produced, as bearing implicit testimony to the truth of the doctrine for which we are contending, and is not elsewhere considered by me; which some therefore will perhaps be surprised that I should have omitted to notice. I mean the petition, in the Lord's prayer, *Thy kingdom come* ^s.

I myself entertain no doubt, that this is a prayer for the arrival of the millenary kingdom, and was always intended to be so: nor do I see, in what sense we can be supposed to pray for the coming of any kingdom of God, distinct from that. We cannot be supposed to pray *now* for the coming

^s Matt. vi. 10. Harm. P. ii. 23. Luke xi. 2. Harm. P. iv. 29.

of the kingdom of God, in the sense of the diffusion of the Christian religion: for in that sense, the kingdom of God has *long* been come, and *long* been established on the earth. Nor can we be supposed now to pray *absolutely*, as we do, when we use this prayer, Thy kingdom come—for the coming of the kingdom of God, in the sense of a greater diffusion of saving truth and knowledge, than has yet taken place in consequence of the propagation of the Gospel: for that would be to pray not *absolutely* for the coming of a *new* kingdom as such, but for the better establishment, and for the wider extension and dominion of one, already come. Still less can we be understood with propriety, in the use of this petition, to pray for the coming of a kingdom of God *in heaven*, where that kingdom has always been come; where it can never be better established, or more fully diffused, than it ever has been: and where it will never be of any other kind, even when men are made angels, and earth is translated to heaven, than it is of, now, and always has been. It follows, then, that the only kingdom of God, for whose coming we can be supposed to pray, in the daily use of this part of the Lord's prayer, since the formal commencement of the propagation of the Gospel at least, must be the millenary kingdom of God and Christ.

But when our Lord prescribed the use of this prayer to his disciples, the formal propagation of the Gospel was not yet begun: and that formal propagation of the Gospel is frequently called the coming of the kingdom of God. It might be said then, that the disciples were directed to pray for that, as what would answer at the time to the meaning of

the terms themselves, and was an event still only in futurity. In like manner, though the use of the Lord's prayer can be traced upwards to the earliest times in the history of the church; and therefore we have every reason to suppose it was intended by its Author, to be a constant form of prayer, prescribed for the observance of his disciples not only before the formal propagation of the Gospel, but afterwards, and was received and perpetuated by the church accordingly; yet we cannot demonstrate the truth of this supposition, beyond the possibility of doubt or cavil: we can only shew, with a high degree of probability, that it is the case. In the use of this prayer, therefore, still, as for something yet to come, which I have shewn can be considered nothing so properly as the millenary kingdom itself, though we have every reason to conclude, we cannot render it demonstratively certain, that we have our Saviour's authority so to use it.

I shall proceed, in the next place, to examine, as briefly as possible, the particular passages of the New Testament, which appear at first sight to furnish some ground of objection to the truth or probability of the doctrine, maintained by the advocates of the millennium.

With respect to these passages—I can discover nothing in the four Gospels at least, which does not harmonize with the various conclusions already established, except Luke xvii. 21: in the answer of our Lord to the question of the Pharisees, When the kingdom of God should come—"For behold, the "kingdom of God is within (*among*) you:" (*ἰδοὺ γὰρ, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν*^t:)—and John xviii.

^m Harm. P. iv. 47.

36: in his declaration to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of *or* from this world:” (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου^u):—and Matt. xxii. 23—33: Mark xii. 18—27: Luke xx. 27—40: in the account of his answer to the Sadducees, on the subject of a resurrection to come^x.

As to the first of these passages, I shall endeavour to prove, when I come to the exposition of the parable of the unjust judge, that the declaration then made has nothing to do with the *nature* of our Saviour’s kingdom; and therefore that it leaves the question whether there is to be such a thing as the temporal kingdom of Christ, exactly *in statu quo*, to be decided on other grounds.

With regard to the second—if it is urged to prove that the kingdom of Christ must needs be a kingdom in heaven, and therefore that he can have no temporal kingdom as such; my answer would be, that no such conclusion is justly deducible from the text. An advocate of the millenary theory would be the foremost to contend that the very kingdom of Christ, which he expects to be established on earth, is still not *from* this world: (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου)—but he would have to learn on what principle the phrase, My kingdom is not *from* this world, (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου,) must be considered equivalent to saying, My kingdom is not, or shall not be, *in* this world; (οὐκ ἔστιν, *or* οὐκ ἔσται, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.)

A kingdom which is not to be established by worldly policy, nor upheld by worldly power, though it may exist or have a being *in* this world, may justly be said not to be *from* or *of* this world. The millenary kingdom of Christ cannot be *of* this

^u Harm. P. iv. 98.

^x Harm. P. iv. 71.

world, because it will be purely and essentially from above: it will be established by a power, derived from God; be discharged as a trust, delegated by God; fulfil a most important part in the schemes and dispensations of the Divine Providence; and be the link that will connect the immaterial and spiritual world, with the material and sensible. It will have for its object, during its subsistence, the perfection of the glory of the Creator, in the visible good, and corresponding gratitude, of the creature; and it will usher in, by its dissolution, the beginning of the state of eternity in the kingdom of the Father, in heaven.

The kingdom of God, as such, is no more *of* this world, than it is of meat and drink; as St. Paul expresses himself^y. Yet the millenary kingdom may be established in the world, and meat and drink may be the appointed means of the support of life, even under the millenary dispensation itself, while it is established in the world. In short, the millenary kingdom of Christ, though to be established in the world, can no more be *of* the world, than the capital of that kingdom, the city Jerusalem herself: “the new, (*ἡ καινή*), the above *one*, (*ἡ ἄνω*), the heavenly, (*ἡ ἐπουράνιος*)”—by all which names she is called^z, though actually to be established on earth, and for that purpose supposed to descend from heaven.

With regard to the answer of our Saviour to the interrogation of the Sadducees; it may appear at first sight to militate against the presumption, that the same state of things in general, however different in particular, will still continue upon earth, during the

^y Rom. xiv. 17.

^z Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. iii. 12: xxi. 2. 10.

millennium and after the first resurrection, as before. But the scope and construction of an answer are necessarily to be restricted by the drift of the question, which produces it. The Sadducees, with whom this conversation took place, denied the truth of the resurrection generally; not of this or that kind of resurrection in particular, but of any resurrection whatever: and consistently with such a principle, they denied also the existence of angels, or spirit; that is, of the soul of man. They were, in short, materialists, like the Epicureans among the Greeks or Romans; who thought their very existence was at an end with the dissolution of their bodily frame, and neither hoped for any thing nor dreaded any thing, after the present life.

In an argument therefore with a sect, which maintained opinions like these, the question was not the truth or probability of the particular resurrection, but of the general one: not whether such and such persons would rise again at the millennium, but whether any would rise again at all. The case which they supposed, then, and in which lay the *nodus* of the difficulty, as they represented it, connected with the belief of a *future* resurrection of the dead, viz. that of the woman, who was married successively to seven brethren; was a case which was intended to apply to the doctrine of the general resurrection; and our Saviour's solution of the difficulty, which was, that the children of the world to come neither marry, nor are given in marriage—applied to it in that capacity also. We do not know that mankind will become *ἰσάγγελοι*, that is, equal, or like unto angels, after the first resurrection, if by being equal to angels is meant the transition of flesh

into spirit : but we have our Lord's assurance that they will do so, after that resurrection of which the Sadducees were asking, and he was speaking : viz. the general one.

And as he thus disproved that part of the doctrine of the Sadducees, which concerned the disbelief of any resurrection to come ; so did he the other part, which denied the separate independent existence of the human soul, out of the body ; by shewing, that if God is still called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so long after the death of those patriarchs,—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive in some state of being, wherein God was capable of retaining his proper relation to them still ; for God cannot be the God of the dead, that is, of those who have no being whatever—but of the living.

The same argument did, indeed, in its consequences establish also the truth of a resurrection to come ; and that too, a resurrection of the body as such ; by which the souls and bodies of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, should sometime again be united as truly as before. For this conclusion, also, necessarily flows from the same continued relation of God to these patriarchs after their death, as during their lifetime in the flesh : in which flesh they must again sometime exist, if the relation in question is ever again to be literally verified, and therefore might be said even when they had so long been dead, virtually still to hold good.

With regard, in the next place, to any seeming contradictions of the millenary doctrines, which may be supplied by the written testimony of other parts of the New Testament, beside the Gospels ; that I may not be obliged to consider every passage

in detail, I shall premise some general observations, which I think will satisfactorily explain all those seeming contradictions.

First, as the millenary dispensation is something the same in general with the state of things ultimately to take effect in heaven; as both are consummations of the present state of things upon earth; as both are œconomies of reward and retribution as such; as both are kingdoms of God and of Christ; as the one is designed gradually to conduct to the other, and to find its ultimate termination and completion in it; it may necessarily often happen that the language of the apostles will be such as to apply to either; especially when it is only general and indefinite.

On this principle we might explain Acts xiv. 22. 1 Thes. i. 10 : ii. 12. 19 : iii. 13. 2 Thes. i. 5—10. 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 1. 6—8. 18. Heb. ii. 5. 8 : ix. 28 : xii. 22—24 : xiii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5. 7. 13 : iv. 13 : v. 1. 4. 2 Pet. i. 4. 10, 11.

Again, though we have seen reason to conclude that the apostles taught their original converts by word of mouth, every needful truth, with regard to the mysteries or secrets of the kingdom of God; yet we have also seen that they did not think proper to commit every such truth distinctly to writing. On the contrary, they observe a studied silence about the most remarkable of them. If, then, any apparent inconsistency between *their* language in reference to the future, and the expectations of the millenarian, can be reconciled together on the principle of *ellipsis* or omission, it is but reasonable that the advocates of the millennium should be allowed the benefit of this principle, to shew that the teach-

ing of the apostles does not contradict their doctrines; it only *presupposes* them.

For instance, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24: after the raising of those that are Christ's, in their proper order, it is subjoined, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power;" which seems to connect the consummation of all things, as an immediate consequence, with the raising of the dead in Christ. But this is no necessary connexion. The millenary œconomy may be transacted between these two things; and be only not distinctly expressed.

In the course of the same chapter, at verse 50, we are told, that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption:" and hence is implied the necessity of the change, alluded to in verses 49. 51—53, of mortal into immortal, and of corruptible into incorruptible, before the inheritance of that kingdom can begin. This kingdom of God is doubtless the spiritual one, properly so called; the arrival whereof supposes the millenary or temporal kingdom to be past. There is consequently no contradiction even here between the fact of either kingdom, as such, and that of the other; the later of them alone is particularly mentioned, because before that alone, is the change necessary, which must qualify flesh and blood to partake of it.

Flesh and blood, we may readily admit, cannot inherit the spiritual kingdom of God; but flesh and blood are capable of inheriting the millenary kingdom—as we may collect both from the fact that persons are to be found alive on the earth, at the

time of its arrival, who will be admitted to partake of it—(for it appears from the testimony of Revelation xx. 4, that one class of communicants in the enjoyment of that kingdom, will be such as have not worshipped the image of the beast, nor received his mark on their forehead, and on their hand; that is, the actual remnant of the true church of Christ, amidst the general apostasy at the time of his personal return:) and from the fact that the saints themselves, who are to be raised to partake of the millennium, are yet to be raised in the bodies, in which they fell asleep.

On this principle of passing at once to the ultimate disposal and state of the body, even after the millenary œconomy, and with the consummation of all things, we may explain, 1 Cor. xv. 35—48. 2 Cor. v. 1—9. Philipp. iii. 20, 21. consistently with the millenarian doctrines.

The same kind of transition to the end of all things, suppressing any distinct mention of the preliminary œconomy of the millennium, will explain the difficulty which might be suggested by 1 Thess. iv. 15—17, which speaks of such as survive at the coming of Christ, being caught up into the air, along with the dead raised previously to life, and so being ever with the Lord; as an event strictly consecutive on his coming. Consecutive no doubt it is: but that it is immediately consecutive, is no necessary inference. There may be something done between them; which the apostle passes over in silence.

The same principle of *ellipsis* or omission, will explain the mention of a new heaven and a new earth, to be expected upon the coming of Christ, and the destruction of the old by fire—2 Pet. iii. 1—13.

The book of Revelation shews that the same consequence may be expected after the general resurrection, and the general judgment^a: and yet that the millennium is previously to be transacted.

Thirdly, it is usual with the apostles to say some things by way of condescension (*συγκαταβητικῶς*): to identify themselves with their immediate hearers, and either with things which do not properly concern *them*: to express many propositions, as if universally applicable, which do in reality apply to the majority, and hold true in general, though they may require to be restricted in part. Thus St. Peter identifies himself with the persons whom he is addressing, 1 Pet. iv. 3: though the sense of the passage can apply solely to them^b: and thus St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 15, speaks of himself, and of the parties addressed, as “We that are living, that are surviving against the appearing and presence of the Lord” (*ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες, οἱ περιλειπόμενοι εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Κυρίου*): though he well knew, that, albeit some should be found alive at the coming of Christ, it would not be himself, nor these Thessalonians.

On the principle of such a condescension, we might explain those passages, which speak of the general judgment as a time and occasion, when Christians as such, both good and bad, are alike to stand and alike to give account, along with the rest of the world, before the tribunal of Christ; consistently with the millennarian doctrine, that the good and faithful of either dispensation will be raised by themselves, and be assured of their final salvation, before the general resurrection, and general judgment, take place. Such passages are, Rom. xiv. 10—12. 2 Cor. v. 10. Cf.

^a Chap. xx. 11—xxi. 1.

^b Cf. Tit. iii. 3.

Acts xvii. 31. 1 Pet. iv. 5, 6. John v. 20—30 : xi. 24—26.

The above conclusion, respecting the future destination of such as partake of the millennium, I think is justly deducible first, from the reason of the thing; that as none but the good and faithful can be admitted to that privilege, no such personal examination into their life and conduct, to ascertain their true personal character and relation to Christ, can await them at the end of the world, as may still await the great mass of mankind. They have already been pronounced worthy to enter into their reward; and in the fruition of what they have experienced under the intermediate dispensation of the millennium, they have already had a foretaste of the joys of eternity in heaven. Secondly, from the assurance of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 29, 30. Luke xviii. 29, 30, passages that we have considered already; which promise to the good and faithful, for all they have sacrificed of temporal happiness, on his account, in the present life, not only the millenary reward on earth, but the everlasting reward in heaven: a promise to which St. Paul very probably alludes, in both its senses, 1 Tim. iv. 8: “For bodily exercise is profitable for little; but godliness is profitable for all *things*, having a promise of life that now is, and that is to come.” Thirdly, from the express declaration of Revel. xx. 6: that over those who have part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power; that is, their salvation is already secure. But, in this case, their judgment as such cannot be yet to come.

On this subject, however, a more general question may be raised; with the consideration of which I

shall conclude my review of the evidence of scripture either for or against the doctrine of the millennium : viz. whether, as the millenary œconomy answers in all respects to an œconomy of retribution, as fully as the preexisting state of things upon earth, until its arrival, corresponds to an œconomy of probation,—some process like that of the general judgment, may not precede even the commencement of the millenary œconomy ; and answer for the proper subjects of that œconomy, the same purposes as the general judgment may be expected to answer, at the end of the world, for the rest of mankind ; that is, to make the same distinction, before the commencement of the millenary dispensation, between those who are worthy, and those who are unworthy, to share in the blessings of that dispensation, as the general judgment, before the commencement of the state of things in heaven, is designed to make, between those who are worthy, and those who are unworthy, to inherit eternal life.

Though the language of scripture has left us, perhaps, under more uncertainty upon this question, than on any other connected with the subject of the millennium, yet I am of opinion that the affirmative of it is the truth ; that there will be a process of trial, followed by a process of separation and retribution, before the millennium begins, for a certain class and description of persons—as well as another, before the end of the world, for the great bulk of mankind ; that the millenary dispensation, as an œconomy of retribution, critically adjusted to a preceding œconomy of probation, will be found to answer to the faithful as such, of every age and of every denomination, both Jews and Gentiles, all the effects and

purposes that the state of things through all eternity in heaven, may be expected to do for the whole of mankind.

The parables which will hereafter come under review, will abundantly establish this truth—that before the commencement of the final state of things which they adumbrate, a process of inquiry is supposed to take place, tending to discriminate such as are worthy to partake in the enjoyment of the resulting good, from such as are not: a process analogous to the course of a judicial investigation, followed by corresponding awards of retribution.

Hence, as those who are supposed to undergo this process, are supposed also in each instance to be found partly worthy and partly unworthy, on personal grounds of distinction, to partake in the good which results; it follows that as far as such subjects denote either Jews or Christians, they must denote them in the complex; they cannot denote the good and faithful among them only, without including those of an opposite description likewise. They must represent therefore the constituent members of the visible church as such, which, whether as existing among the Jews first, or among the Gentiles subsequently, has always been made up of a complex of professing members, like this.

It seems to be implied, then, that the proper subjects of the retributive millenary œconomy, as far as they can be collected from such and such parables, are the members of the visible church in the complex; that these will be the parties assembled before their proper Lord and Master, Christ, to undergo a process analogous to the general judgment, as far as *they* are concerned, before the millennium

itself can begin; the final end of which will be to determine, among the complex of persons who have nominally composed the congregation of the visible church, at all periods of its existence, who are worthy to be associated in the happiness of that dispensation, and who are not.

It may therefore be of such a standing before the tribunal of Christ as this, and as incumbent hereafter upon Christians in particular, in contradistinction to the rest of mankind, that the allusions made in the passages above quoted, were meant.

It will follow, then, that all the members of the visible church, who shall either then be in being, or ever have been, will be assembled before the tribunal of Christ; and therefore that such of them as are dead, must be raised to life to undergo their trial likewise, before any can be admitted to partake in the benefits of the millenary dispensation. But though all, both good and bad, must undergo this trial indiscriminately; they will not be all admitted into the millenary kingdom, indiscriminately. What, then, we may ask, will be the disposal of those, whom the result of their trial shall pronounce unworthy of admission into it? and what will be *their* punishment, as opposed to the reward of the rest?

The answer to this question seems to be supplied by the parables which relate to the subject of the millenary dispensation; all agreeing in this *one* result, that whatever be the peculiar blessing or privilege, described as awarded, under the circumstances of the case, to such, as by their previous personal behaviour, have rendered themselves entitled to it; the loss of that blessing, the privation of that privilege, is the particular punishment, sup-

posed to befall those, who, by an opposite conduct, have rendered themselves unworthy of it.

We might have inferred something of this kind, even from the language of Dan. xii. 2. already quoted in reference to the first resurrection: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt." As everlasting life is a positive good, so are shame and contempt positively evil, and implied in the privation of the good in question; for as honour and distinction must be involved in the gift of eternal life, so must shame and contempt be included in the privation thereof.

But the same truth is very plainly taught us in many of the parables. Thus, in the parable of the tares, while the good grain is gathered into barns, the tares and the chaff are left to be burned. In that of the dragnet, while the good fish are reserved for store, the bad are thrown away as refuse. In that of the nobleman and his servants, while the faithful and diligent servant, in each instance, is promoted, the unprofitable servant is cast into outer darkness. In the parable of the virgins, while the wise ones are admitted to the nuptial feast, the unwise ones are shut out from it: and so in other instances.

The condition then of those, who are represented as suffering for their personal misconduct in such instances as these, appears rather to be negatively good than positively evil: that is, if evil, yet more as arising from the absence of good, than from the presence of evil. It implies at least the positive privation of that good, in their case, which is actually present elsewhere. It seems, therefore, the situation of those, who are *ill off* at present, but may be *worse off* here-

after: who are miserable in the absence of present enjoyment, and more so with the prospect of future suffering. This condition is very regularly expressed by that of those who are thrust into the darkness *without*, in opposition, no doubt, to such as are in the enjoyment of light *within*: and its two most characteristic attributes are these, “of weeping, and “the gnashing of the teeth:” (ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων:) acts expressive of sorrow and despair; of sorrow, under the sense of immediate loss; of despair, under the conviction that this loss is irretrievable.

If such be the case, we may perceive with what good reason the first resurrection should be called *κατ' ἐξοχὴν*, the resurrection of the just: because, however many, both bad and good, both just and unjust, may be raised by it alike, into the positive fruition of its peculiar blessings none will or can be admitted, but the good and just; while the retributive punishment, which awaits the rest, is the present bad effect of the loss of so inestimable a privilege; and the consciousness, that whatever that effect may be, it is irremediable.

Such persons, then, though suffering at this very time in a way, and to a degree, peculiarly evil to themselves, and as far as they are concerned, in the inverse ratio of the good which is actually enjoyed by the rest, may still be in the condition of those, who are reserved for worse evil to come, and for more suffering than has yet been inflicted on them. There seems no reason, why the evil of those, who shall be excluded from the enjoyment of the millenary kingdom—peculiar as it is, while it lasts—should not admit of being aggravated, at the

end of that time, as much as that the peculiar good of such as have been allowed to partake of it, at the end of the same time should admit of being increased. The joys of heaven will no doubt greatly exceed to these latter all the joys of the millennium; yet the blessings of the millennium may have been to them an apt foretaste, and an infallible earnest, of the joys of heaven: and on the same principle, the evils of eternal punishment may much exceed to the reprobate the misery of their condition during the millenary dispensation; and yet this last have been to them also an equally expressive forerunner and equally certain voucher of the punishment, that awaits them through all eternity.

And hence we may explain why the infliction of their peculiar punishment upon them, even before the expiration of the millennium, may be described by their being cast into the furnace of fire^c. It will render it probable, also, that the final judgment and condemnation of such as these, not being complete until their eternal punishment itself begins; some further judgment may await them at the end of the world, though no further approval can await the good and faithful, who are already the acknowledged heirs of salvation. In this case, Matt. xii. 41, 42: and Luke xi. 31, 32: as well as Matt. xi. 22—24, or Luke x. 14: may assert that which will hereafter be strictly verified by the event. We have but to suppose that the final condemnation of *all* the reprobate will take place together, just as the final acceptance of *all* the good; and such declarations will be rendered consistent with our previous assumption, that part of

^c Matt. xiii. 42. 49.

the wicked may have been already condemned even before the millennium, and part have been suffering more or less of their proper punishment, even during it.

CHAPTER XII. PART II.

On the Millennium. Historical Testimonies to the Antiquity of the Doctrine.

IT is well known that the most ancient Christian writer, who left on record an authentic testimony to his belief in the expectation of a millennium, or of a personal reign of Christ upon earth, and in the other articles of faith connected with that expectation, was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia. His testimony was contained in a work of his, in five books, called *Λόγων Κυριακῶν ἑξήγησις*, An exposition of words or sayings of the Lord, or in relation to the Lord; of which, though the work itself has not come down to us, Eusebius and others have preserved some account ^a.

The passage which Eusebius cites from the proëm, or introduction to this work, seems to imply that Papias himself had not conversed personally with any of the apostles, though he was only one link removed from them, and what he reported as the words and sayings of the apostles, was the report of what he had heard from those, who had both lived and conversed with them.

The testimony, however, of Irenæus, which is produced at the outset of the same chapter of the ecclesiastical history, represents him as an *hearer* of St. John, (the apostle,) and as a *friend* and *acquaintance* of Polycarp, the venerable Christian bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom early in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. And indeed, if Papias was

^a Eus. E. H. iii. 39. p. 110—112.

truly the latter, he might also be the former; that is, as Polycarp, in early youth, had heard and conversed with St. John, and is said to have been ordained bishop of Smyrna by him, there is no reason why Papias also, his friend and acquaintance, his equal in years, and like him, living in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, where St. John passed the last years of his life, might not both have seen and conversed with that apostle.

Nor is this fact inconsistent with the implicit testimony of the preamble to his work, on the Exposition of the sayings of the Lord. He tells us there, that he should not hesitate to embody in this collection of records, whatsoever he well remembered to have carefully learned from the *πρεσβύτεροι* or elders; pledging himself to the truth and fidelity of his reports. He had never, like the world at large, delighted in listening to such as could speak most eloquently, but to such as taught the truth; nor to those who recorded the commands of others, (merely human teachers,) but what had been delivered from the Lord, (to the keeping of faith,) and was derived from the truth itself. Did he fall in with any one, who had conversed with the elders, he inquired of him about the words of the elders; what Andrew, or Peter, or Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord, were wont to say; what Aristio, or the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say: for he was ever of opinion that no information to be obtained from books, was as beneficial as that which was to be had from the oral testimony of contemporaries.

Such is the account which this simple minded

bishop and martyr gives of his own inquisitiveness, and of the pains he was at, both to glean and to verify his information. It is observable, that he speaks even of the apostles, as elders, or presbyters, no doubt in reference to their antiquity merely; and of St. John among the rest: with regard to whose sayings or teachings in particular, there must have been much which Papias could learn only from the report of others, though he himself had seen and conversed with the apostle; provided he did so in his youth, like Polycarp, and towards the close of the apostle's mortal career.

One who was thus a contemporary at least of apostolical men, the immediate converts and disciples of the apostles, if not of the apostles themselves; and who was so curious to obtain all the information in his power, concerning the teaching and preaching of the apostles, or of other inspired and infallible instructors; could not want the means of gratifying his curiosity. All his contemporaries and equals in age, must have been persons exactly in the situation to give him the satisfaction, he was in search of.

Two of his authorities he certainly speaks of, not merely as disciples of the Lord, (perhaps of the number of the seventy,) but also as contemporaries of his own; Aristio, and John the presbyter. He does not say, in reference to these, as in reference to the rest, "what they were wont to say;" but, "what they say:" which implies that he knew them to be still speaking and teaching, and therefore to be still alive. Eusebius, who had access to his work in its entire state, shews that this is a just inference; telling us, that Papias represented himself as

(*αὐτήκεις*) a personal hearer of these two in particular, and specified many (*παραδόσεις*) or traditionary doctrines, in the course of his work, as what he had received directly from them.

To come, however, more immediately to Eusebius' account of his testimony to the millennium, &c.; after mentioning the fact of two illustrious miracles, handed down to posterity by him, Eusebius proceeds to the following effect: "There are other things also, which the same writer has set forth, as what had come to his knowledge through the channel of tradition, not recorded in writing; certain strange parables of our Saviour, and teachings of his; and some other things of the more fabulous sort. Among these, he says that there will be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead; the kingdom of Christ being to be established bodily on this earth. These opinions, I suppose, he formed, having received accounts transmitted from the apostles, but not having comprehended the meaning of what they had expressed mystically, under similitudes. For he seems to have been a man of very mean understanding, as one may infer from his own words: though he has been the means of inducing very many of the writers of the church to form the same expectation; defending themselves, as they have done, by the antiquity of the man: for example Irenæus, and any other who has declared the same sentiments. There are other accounts too of the words of our Saviour, from the above-mentioned Aristio, and traditions of John the presbyter, which Papias hands down to us in his own work."

Our first remark upon this passage, from its concluding paragraph at least, would be, that the strange or unheard-of parables of our Saviour, and the other particulars, approaching to the marvellous, including the doctrine of a millennium, were as much derived by tradition from Aristio, or John the presbyter, as the rest of what Papias reported.

And as to Eusebius' observation on the understanding of Papias, I apprehend it to mean that, in his opinion, he was a person of very little judgment; not knowing how to discriminate between what was parabolically or figuratively, and what was literally to be understood. If such, however, was the case; it follows that Papias construed and interpreted every thing, just as he heard it delivered: and has recorded it in his writings, just as he construed and interpreted it. We may depend, then, upon the fidelity of his reports at least, and that he has represented the matter of fact of what he heard, if no more. Therefore, when he reports, among other things, the doctrine of the millenary reign of Christ, he reports it exactly as he received it; and he received it exactly as he reports it. If so, the futurity of a millenary reign on earth, after a resurrection of the dead, was plainly delivered and promulgated by some one, or more, of the authorities of Papias; all, being either disciples of the Lord themselves, or disciples of those who had been.

Now this is all that we need to desire, for the decision of the point at issue. Let it only be conceded that an apostle, that any other disciple of our Lord himself, or any apostolical man, did plainly, openly, and literally inculcate the futurity of such a fact as the millenary reign on earth, and we may give

Eusebius the benefit of his similitudes and parables, to be applied as he thinks fit; we shall be bound to believe with Papias that the fact is just as it was inculcated, and certainly to be sometime expected: we may challenge any one to explain a doctrine so taught and so inculcated, in any but the literal sense.

The millennium in question, according to Papias, and therefore to the authorities of Papias, was to follow upon some resurrection. Hence if the former be something figurative, the latter must be so too. And what are we to understand by a resurrection from the dead in figure? Any thing which had not taken place up to the time of Papias—as *his* resurrection certainly had not—or that has taken place, since his time, which must not, just as necessarily, have happened before it? Was it such a resurrection as we read of Hymenæus and Philetus' teaching had already taken place in their time? for which St. Paul delivered them over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme^b.

And, supposing the resurrection intended by Papias to have taken place, what has been the reign, which was to follow it? what has been its duration? when did it begin, and when did it end? Or must every thing be consistent, and all be understood symbolically alike: a resurrection, which precedes, in figure; a reign, which follows, in figure; the thousand years for which it lasts, in figure also: a symbolical antecedent; a symbolical consequent; and a symbolical accident of duration! Surely, all this seems to be the very climax of absurdity. Yet we have no means of avoiding it, except by supposing that, as Papias recorded the tradition of his mil-

^b 2 Tim. ii. 17.

lennium, in plain terms, because it had been plainly delivered to him, it must be plainly to be received; and sometime to be literally fulfilled.

It is further observable upon the account of the doctrine as thus transmitted by Papias, that it pretends to no more than a simple statement of the future fact; with none of the embellishments which the same doctrine received in the hands of certain early heresiarchs, and their followers, whose opinions I shall consider elsewhere^c. Even this simple and naked way of proposing the doctrine, is some voucher for the authenticity of its original. An unprejudiced reader of the book of Revelation at present, might certainly collect from that part of it, which relates to this subject, the futurity of the event in general, but nothing of its particular nature or circumstances: and one who, like Papias, merely reported faithfully statements in reference to the same topic, which he had received from equally inspired and equally unadulterated sources of truth, would probably neither have himself, nor be able to communicate to others, more information about it, than the certain futurity of the simple fact.

Again—while Eusebius asserts that Papias' having first given publication to these opinions, was the occasion of their being adopted by other eminent ecclesiastical writers, it is observable that he acknowledges these were *very many* (πλείστοι ὄσοι)—and they must all, of course, have been prior to his own time, which was not later than A. D. 300. This admission virtually implies that the belief in the futurity of the millennium was the orthodox or catholic notion, in the second and third centuries.

^c Vide the Appendix.

In the next place, whereas he cites Irenæus in particular, as one of those who had been so influenced by the supposed authority of Papias, to imbibed the same persuasions; that Irenæus was acquainted with the writings of Papias, is very true: that his own opinions, either on the subject of the millennium, or any other, were determined by those of Papias, is a precarious assumption of Eusebius'. That he agreed with Papias in expecting a millennium, we shall presently see from his own writings: that he refers the grounds of his expectation to his authority, except as included under the general name and description of the presbyters or elders, who had individually attested the same truth, does not appear from any passage in his works still extant. Instead of tracing up his opinions on any subject to Papias, it is, probably, much more correct to refer them to Polycarp; to whom he actually often appeals, and what he had heard and learned from him, though in early life, he says he still remembered more clearly and distinctly, than recent events.

But Justin Martyr is a more ancient writer than Irenæus; and a contemporary of Polycarp and Papias themselves. Now Justin maintains the belief of a millennium, if possible, more plainly than Irenæus himself; yet that he had it second hand from Papias in particular, no one can shew; whose name he never once mentions; whose very existence, for ought that we know to the contrary, he might not be acquainted with. Here, then, is an instance of a celebrated ecclesiastical writer, who taught the same doctrine, in this one respect, as Papias, or Irenæus, and yet obtained his knowledge of it from neither. What explanation of this coincidence is more pro-

bable, than that the doctrine which they all inculcated, was the popular, catholic, and current doctrine of the church, in the time of them all?

Lastly, when Eusebius accounts for the deference of later ecclesiastical writers to the opinions of Papias, as the homage paid to his antiquity; he must have forgotten that in the time of Irenæus, this antiquity was nothing so great; not more than the difference which exists, in a thousand similar instances, between the lifetime of a young man and that of an old one, who yet may have been, for part of their time, at least, contemporaries. If Irenæus, in early life, had known and been acquainted with Polycarp, he must have been so far a contemporary of Papias; whom he himself calls an (ἑταῖρος) or comrade of Polycarp; and that implies that he was his (ὁμῆλιξ) his fellow in age. And as to Justin Martyr, the comparative antiquity of Papias referred to him, was even still less: for it may be shewn, that Justin's Dialogue with Trypho was written at the end of the reign of Hadrian; and his two Apologies early in that of Antoninus Pius; and that if Papias suffered with Polycarp, both suffered in the fourth year of Marcus Aurelius, A. D. 164.

But let it be supposed that the authority of Papias, founded upon his antiquity, was the reason which induced so many, of aftertimes, to receive with implicit respect, his traditionary testimony to the millennium—when is the antiquity of a witness to be taken into account, in matters of controversy? When we would ascend to the fountain head of the channel, in which particular accounts have been derived to posterity; when we would arrive, if possible, at the first sources of information, and come to the

times of living authorities, to know what was said or done by them, bearing upon the point in dispute. The antiquity of Papias makes his testimony to the millennium so much the more valuable, because it is a voucher to posterity that he had opportunities of seeing or conversing with those, whose teaching must first have given occasion to a certain belief, afterwards current in the church, if it ever had any foundation in truth or probability. That circumstance of age placed Papias only in the next degree to the apostles; and made him actually the contemporary of apostolical men. With reason, then, might tenets and opinions, not put forth as his own, but as received from those, with whom he had conversed, the disciples of Jesus, or those of the apostles, appear to posterity entitled to respect. If he has reported them faithfully, they are no longer to be considered his, but those of the parties from whom he received them. Now the honesty of Papias has never yet been impeached, though his judgment and his understanding have been called in question: and while his honesty remains unimpeachable, we may continue to receive the statements which he has transmitted to us, as correct representations of what he himself had heard: in which case, I have already shewn, that those statements are to be received as substantially true. To talk of a resurrection that *was* to come, and of a reign of a thousand years upon earth, that *was* to follow it, was either to predict a future matter of fact, or absolutely nothing that could have a being; was either purposely to deceive, or to speak the truth.

It certainly could not have been intended by Eusebius to object to the testimony of Papias, on the

score of his antiquity ; but merely to insinuate that the millennarians, before his own time, had been mainly, if not entirely, influenced by his antiquity, to declare themselves converts to his opinions. But even if they were so converted to his opinions, it was not simply to the opinions of one individual, like Papias, but as to the general persuasion of the elders with whom he had conversed, and to whom he appealed for the truth of the opinions themselves. Nor were they converted by the opinions of Papias, upon a point of doctrine, but by his testimony upon a matter of fact. A future event is matter of fact, as much as a past one : only that the one has happened, the other is still to happen. Prophecy is testimony to the future, as history is to the past ; and one who speaks by inspiration is as credible a witness to the former, on the plea of foreknowledge, as another, the best qualified for the purpose of history by the extent and accuracy of his researches into the past, is to the latter. Aristotle, in his *Rhetorica*, gives the testimony of oracles a place, among the other modes of establishing facts^d. Papias reported the testimony of the elders to the millennium, as the testimony of prophets and inspired men to the future ; and the church, in aftertimes, might receive and defer to it, on the same grounds. The question then recurs, did he repeat it aright ? not, did he repeat it faithfully, for that is admitted ; but did he understand what he repeated ? To which I reply, that if he received it exactly as he reports it—he must have understood it right :—no opinion, either on facts or on doctrines, can be traced up to the oral, *viva voce* teaching of apostles, or apostolical men,

^d I. xv. 14.

especially so extraordinary an opinion as this, and yet turn out to be false.

The next ancient father, whose testimony to the millennium I shall consider, is Justin Martyr, a Samaritan, of Neapolis in Palestine, and a martyr to the Gospel, as I have endeavoured to shew, in my former work^e, not long after U. C. 899. A. D. 146.

That Justin was a strenuous millennarian is well known to all his readers. I shall cite, at length, only one passage from his works; which, however, is *unum instar omnium*.

Dialog. p. 310. l. 26. and sqq: “ Upon this Trypho
 “ said to me, I told you, sir, you were anxious to be
 “ certain in all things, and kept close to the scrip-
 “ tures. But tell me truly, do you profess that this
 “ place, Jerusalem, is to be built again, and expect
 “ that your people will be brought together, and re-
 “ joice with the Messiah, together with the patri-
 “ archs, and the prophets, and those who belong to
 “ our nation, or even of such as were proselytes,
 “ before the coming of your Messiah? or are you
 “ induced to profess these things, that you may seem
 “ to get the better of us in our inquiries?

“ And I said, I am not such a wretch, O Trypho,
 “ as to say any thing but what I think. I professed
 “ to you therefore, before also, that I indeed and
 “ many others think so, as I am sure you are aware,
 “ that this thing will come to pass: but I told you
 “ there were many on the other hand, even of those
 “ whose sentiments as Christians were sound and
 “ pious, that did not recognise it. I, however,
 “ and any besides, who are Christians of a right

^e Diss. xi. vol. i.

“ way of thinking in all respects, know that there
 “ shall be both a resurrection of the flesh, and a
 “ thousand years in Jerusalem, built and adorned
 “ and enlarged, *as* the prophets Ezekiel, and Isaiah,
 “ and the rest *of them*, profess . . . forasmuch too,
 “ as among us also, a certain man, called John, one
 “ of the apostles of the Messiah, foretold in a reve-
 “ lation which was made to him, that they who
 “ have believed in our Messiah shall pass a thou-
 “ sand years in Jerusalem, and that afterwards the
 “ general, and, in one word, everlasting resurrection
 “ of all men at once, with one accord, and judgment,
 “ will take place; what our Lord also said, that
 “ they shall neither marry, nor be given in mar-
 “ riage, but shall be equal to angels, being children
 “ of the God of the resurrection ^f.”

This passage renders a distinct testimony to Justin's belief upon all the principal points, at issue between the millennarians and their opponents; that there will be a resurrection of the faithful dead; a reunion of all, both Jews and Christians, under Christ at Jerusalem; a visible reign of Christ there, for a thousand years; and the like.

Nor does it detract from its value, that he acknowledges the existence of many good Christians, in his own time, who nevertheless did not entertain the same belief in these respects, as himself and others. On the score of an ingenuous candour, it rather

^f Cf. Dial. 219. 2-14 : 241. 17-19 : 324. 25-28 : 371. 12-23 : 378. 3-379. 1 : 408. 6. 7 : 432. 22-433. 13.—The reader will be pleased to observe on the above translation, and on any other which may occur in the course of the work, that they are purposely made as literal as possible—that the unlearned reader may be the better able to judge of the sense of the original by the version.

adds to its merit, that no attempt is made to exaggerate the real state of the case; or to make the doctrine appear the more incontrovertible, by representing it as universal in the church. The belief in the futurity of the millennium was never indiscriminately entertained, no more than its disbelief: and it is enough for my purpose, if I can shew that in the times immediately after the apostolical, it was the most general and orthodox; and this Justin distinctly asserts it was, while he admits there were some, and those in other respects very sound and unexceptionable Christians, who nevertheless dissented from the popular belief. The doctrine of the millennium shared in this respect the same fortune as the book of Revelation, on which it is mainly founded. There were always some who doubted of the authenticity and authority of that book, even while the majority of the church acknowledged both.

Nor ought it to surprise us that the doctrine in question, though affecting the Jews as much as the Christians, in its personal consequences to either, yet appeared new and unheard-of to Justin's adversary in this dialogue, Trypho the Jew. It could not but have appeared so. The doctrine of a millennium was doubtless a *μυστήριον* or secret, which the church of Christ kept to itself, and did not promiscuously communicate to the Gentile or unbeliever. The futurity of a second advent of Christ is openly avowed in Justin's first Apology, addressed to the Roman emperor, Antoninus Pius [§]; but there is no such statement of a reign of his upon earth, to ensue on that coming, as we have seen to be plainly asserted in the Dialogue with Trypho.

[§] Pag. 76. 7—78. 30.

These secret expectations relating to the future, were the mystical pearls of the Gospel, committed to the keeping of faith, and to be freely circulated, indeed, among the members of the church; but not to be given to dogs, or cast as worthless before swine. What then, was an ignorant and prejudiced Jew, such as Trypho, likely to have known about them, until he heard them for the first time, as they were declared by Justin, in the course of this very dialogue? Lactantius, after descanting at full length upon these mysteries, closes his account of them in the following terms; which abundantly demonstrate that, however confidently believed and generally professed among such as were Christians, they were not less carefully concealed from such as were not^h.

“ This is the doctrine of the holy prophets, which
“ we Christians adopt as our sect; this is our wis-
“ dom; which those men, who either worship frail
“ things, (*idols*,) or profess an empty philosophy,
“ ridicule as folly and delusion, because we are not
“ wont to maintain and assert it publicly, God com-
“ manding *us*, quietly and silently, to keep his secret
“ in concealment, and within our own conscience;
“ and not to strive with an obstinate spirit of con-
“ tention against those truly profane persons, who,
“ not for the sake of learning, but of cavilling and
“ making game, mercilessly assail God and his re-
“ ligion. A mystery (or *secret*) indeed, ought to be
“ hidden and covered up, as faithfully as possible;
“ especially by us, who bear the name of the faith
“ (*the faithful*). They, however, falsely accuse this
“ reservedness of ours, as if a consciousness of guilt;
“ and on that ground, they invent also certain abo-

^h Div. Inst. vii. 26. 673.

“ minable opinions concerning the chaste and innocent, and greedily assent to their own inventions ⁱ.”

Let us now proceed to examine the testimony of Irenæus, bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, in which

ⁱ It is mentioned by Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, iii. xx. 90. A. that, in the persecution of the Christians by Domitian, (about A. D. 94 or 95,) the grandchildren of Jude, one of the brethren of our Lord, were brought before the emperor, and questioned concerning Christ and his kingdom; of which perhaps Domitian had heard enough, to make him jealous of it. They are said to have answered, that his kingdom was not of this world, nor terrestrial, but heavenly and angelical, being to take place at the consummation of all things, &c.

Without doubting of the truth of this story, (which Eusebius most probably took from Hegesippus, a Christian writer, who lived and wrote very soon after the time when it is supposed to have happened,) I will only observe first, that as to the account of Christ's kingdom, given in the above words, it is Eusebius' version of the answer, in substance, merely; and Eusebius was no millenarian: secondly, that the import of it is just to the same effect as our Lord's declaration to Pilate, that his kingdom was not of this world; which nevertheless I have shewn to be consistent with the fact of a reign of his sometime or other upon earth: thirdly, that the passage produced from Lactantius, proves that the expectation of a millenary reign of Christ upon earth, however confidently entertained, was yet not promiscuously avowed: fourthly, that to such a question as Domitian's, who was anxious to know more of Christ's kingdom, supposing it to be of a political nature, and formidable to his own, no other answer could have been returned: lastly, that so early as A. D. 94. it is very unlikely that the Revelation, though it might have been seen, had yet come to be generally known among Christians; nor consequently any such doctrine as that of the millennium, properly so called, to be a common article of belief in the church: and, therefore, that on all these accounts the above tradition, admitting its truth, furnishes no ground of objection either to the antiquity, or to the fact of the general reception of the doctrine.

office he succeeded to Pothinus upon his martyrdom, an event that took place very probably, as it may be shewn, about A. D. 170.

The whole of the fifth and last extant book of his work against heresies, (*adversus hæreses*,) from chapter 25 to the end of it, relates to the subject of the unfulfilled prophecies in the book of Revelation, Daniel, and the rest: and it supplies the clearest intimations, that in the expectation of the temporal kingdom of Christ, his opinions agreed with those of Papias and Justin Martyr. I shall produce one passage from it, as sufficient for our present purpose: though in fact almost the whole of it might be transcribed and cited.

First, then, after arguing, as we have done already, that our Lord's promise to drink again of the fruit of the vine, can be fulfilled only during his personal presence in his kingdom on earth^k; and again, in like manner, that the reward promised in the resurrection of the just, to the sacrifice of temporal good, made in this life, for the sake of deeds of charity done to the poor and impotent, is also to be realised in the same; he proceeds to make some observations on the blessing of Jacob by Isaac, and then continues as follows.

“ The aforesaid blessing therefore, doubtless ap-
 “ pertains to the times of the kingdom, when the
 “ just shall rise from the dead, and reign: when the
 “ creature (*the creation*) also, being made new, and
 “ freed, shall produce an abundance of every kind of
 “ food, ‘ of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of
 “ the earth:’ according as the Elders, who saw John
 “ the disciple of the Lord, have mentioned that they

^k Chap. v. 33. 453. sqq.

“ themselves heard of him, after what manner the
“ Lord was wont to teach concerning those times,
“ and to say; ‘ The days shall come, when vines
“ shall be produced, each with ten thousand branches,
“ and in each branch ten thousand shoots, and on
“ every shoot ten thousand sprigs, and on every
“ sprig ten thousand bunches, and in every bunch ten
“ thousand grapes, and every grape being squozen
“ shall yield five-and-twenty metretæ of wine. And
“ when one of them, *that is*, of the saints shall have
“ laid hold of a bunch, another shall cry out, I am
“ a better bunch; take me: by me bless the Lord.’
“ In like manner that a corn of wheat also should
“ produce ten thousand ears, and every ear should
“ have ten thousand corns, and every corn ten pounds
“ of fine clean flour: moreover also that the remain-
“ ing kinds of fruits, and seeds, and herbs, *should do*
“ *the same thing*, in a corresponding manner such
“ as is suitable to them. And that all animals,
“ living on the kinds of food which are received
“ from the ground, should become peaceable, and
“ one in harmony with another, being subject to
“ men with all subjection. Moreover, Papias also,
“ an ancient, who was an hearer of John, and a com-
“ rade of Polycarp, over and above bears testimony
“ (*ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ*) to these things, by writing, in his
“ fourth book; for there are five books which he
“ has composed. And he added (*that is, the Lord*)
“ saying, Now these things are worthy of belief unto
“ the believing. And when Judas, the traitor, says
“ he, (*viz. Papias,*) did not believe, and asked, How
“ then are such productions to be wrought by the
“ Lord, the Lord said, They shall see, who shall
“ come to those (times.)”

Perhaps the above description was intended by Eusebius, when he spoke of those certain new or strange parables and teachings of the Lord, reported by Papias. It is to be observed, however, that Irenæus attributes it very plainly not to him primarily, but to the elders in general, who had seen St. John, and heard it from his own mouth: he mentions Papias at last only to say, that he *also* gave the same account over and above, in his fourth book. As to the presbyters, or elders, it is clearly supposed by him that they reported the above particulars as what they themselves had heard, not at second hand, but directly from St. John. And Irenæus, as he tells us himself¹, lived so near to the time of St. John, that he was almost contemporary with the publication of the Revelation. There must, consequently, have been many persons still living in his days, who had personally known and conversed with St. John; from whom he might have had an account of some or other of his oral discourses.

Lastly, “ These things are worthy *or* capable of “ belief, unto the believing:” and “ They shall see “ who shall come to those times:” declarations which remind us, especially the former, of other sententious and pregnant gnomæ of our Saviour, “ He that hath “ ears to hear, let him hear,” (ὁ ἔχων ᾗτα ἀκούειν, ἀκούετω,) and, “ He that can contain *it*, let him contain “ *it*” (ὁ χωρῶν, χωρείτω). It is worthy of remark, that the above description, extraordinary as it may appear, is not known to have formed part of any of the spurious or apocryphal Gospels, of which so many were once extant; nor to have existed in any shape but that of an oral tradition, received by St. John’s

¹ Lib. v. 30. 449. 20.

contemporaries from himself, and preserved in these two instances, first by Papias, and afterwards by Irenæus, in writing. All this is in favour of the presumption that it is actually what it professes to be; a repetition from the mouth of St. John of a remarkable discourse or prophecy, first actually delivered by our Saviour. And as to the matter of fact of the description, relating to the extraordinary plenty of all the productions of nature, under the millennium, some such extraordinary abundance was *a priori* to be expected of a dispensation like that, and we have seen is actually promised in general terms, by a variety of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Nor is it harder of belief, even as most literally to be understood, than what Genesis reports of the trees of paradise, before the fall; or St. John, in the Revelation, of the Tree of Life, after the restitution of all things^m.

^m I am well aware, however, that to persons of a certain turn of mind, the above extract, in some of its particulars, will appear so marvellous, that unless more is said in defence or explanation of it, than the reader has met with in the text, it is likely to do more harm to the credit of the cause, in support of which I adduce it, than good. Dr. Middleton produces it, in his "Free Enquiry," as one of the most triumphant proofs of the childish simplicity of the fathers; and Dr. Whitby, in his "Discourse on the Millennium," does not scruple to call it, as one of the other fables of Papias, "more infamous" than any thing, which can be found in the whole circle of Romish legends.

For my own part, I find it in Irenæus, gravely and seriously related, as became a grave and serious discourse; and as I cannot but conclude from his writings, that Irenæus had as much common sense as Middleton, and as delicate a feeling of propriety as Whitby, I cannot but infer also, that his understanding would have revolted from what was *absurd*, and his sense of decorum have been shocked by what was *infamous*, as soon as theirs.

No mention, it is true, is made in the above citation, of the duration of the state of things in ques-

The questions which I should wish to consider in reference to this subject, are first, the authenticity, and secondly, the credibility, of the discourse, which contains the description in question; the former depending on the historical testimony to its origin—the latter on the substance, or matter of fact, of the description itself.

The former of these questions may be dispatched in a few words. We receive the account of this description, at the present day, from Irenæus; Irenæus received it in his time from the elders; the elders received it in theirs from St. John; St. John received it in his from the Lord—and so it is traced from our own day to the fountain head. Let those who dispute its authenticity, prove to us, that we are mistaken in considering it a genuine part of the work of Irenæus; that Irenæus was mistaken in declaring that he received it of the elders; that the elders were mistaken in declaring that they heard it from St. John; that St. John was mistaken in declaring that he heard it from our Lord. That we actually have it from Irenæus, I leave to the editors of his works to prove; that Irenæus might actually have it from the elders, that the elders might actually have it from St. John, and that St. John might actually hear it from the Lord—if the one, for more or less of the duration of their lives, lived and conversed with the other in each of these instances—no one will deny.

It is a gross mistake, and unworthy of scholars, to infer from the words of Irenæus, that he derived his account from Papias. He declares himself that he had it first of all, from the elders in general, who had heard St. John; and he mentions it only *obiter*, and by way of confirmation, that he had found the same things also in Papias; and by mentioning further that he had found them in *writing* in Papias, he clearly implies that he had them by word of mouth from the elders. And what, if he had derived it from Papias? the state of the case would not have been affected thereby: for Papias also was an elder or ancient; not only a contemporary of Polycarp, but, if Irenæus himself is to be believed, an hearer even of St. John.

The apostle St. John was living A. D. 104: Polycarp suffered

tion. But Irenæus repeatedly expresses this duration by a *dies septima*, or seventh day, appropriated

martyrdom at the age of eighty-seven, A. D. 164: in which case, he was twenty-seven years old A. D. 104. It was evidently possible for him, then, to have often both seen and heard St. John: and this is confirmed by the fact, that according to a variety of ancient testimonies, he was made bishop of Smyrna by St. John. The Paschal Chronicon supposes Papias to have suffered martyrdom at the same time as Polycarp; and Irenæus, who calls them *ἐταῖροι*, implies that the one was about as old as the other. It was as possible, therefore, for Papias to have personally known St. John, as for Polycarp. And with respect to Irenæus, he tells us expressly of himself that he had often seen and heard Polycarp; that his figure, his voice, his words were still distinctly present to his recollection—in which case he might just as frequently have seen and talked with others, the contemporaries of Polycarp, all of whom, like him and Papias, whether for a longer or a shorter time, had known and conversed with St. John. And these contemporaries of Polycarp in general, and Polycarp himself in particular, are that class of persons whom Irenæus must be supposed to mean, when he refers to the presbyters or elders, (without specifying the names of individuals,) who had seen or heard the apostles.

So much for the historical or external testimony, on which the authenticity of the passage in question rests: let some words next be said on its intrinsic credibility.

Words of any kind, which whether rightly or wrongly are ascribed to our blessed Saviour, ought at least to be treated with reverence, out of respect to him whose they are even thought to be; and cannot be a fit subject for banter or ridicule—especially from Christian divines. We may question the fact of their actually proceeding from Him; we may be inclined at first sight to consider them unworthy of Him: but while there is a possibility of the fact's being true, let us be cautious how we prejudge it hastily—if the words may still have proceeded from Christ, let us always remember that whether they appear so to us, or not, they must be intrinsically worthy of the Speaker.

to rest, and sanctification : and a seventh day supposes of necessity six others before it ; and a seventh

Dr. Whitby was much inclined to make himself merry with the idea of vines, big enough to contain ten thousand branches ; branches big enough to contain ten thousand bunches ; bunches big enough to contain ten thousand grapes ; and so forth : more especially with the idea of a grape, large enough to distil twenty-five *metretæ*, that is, a tun of wine, and grains of corn, large enough to yield ten pounds of flour.

But before an objector entertained his fancy at the expense of the description, it would be only fair to consider that we have the description not in the words of Irenæus' original Greek, but simply in those of the old Latin version—and that though this version, as it once existed, might be in a remarkable manner faithful to the original, yet as we have it at present, both in other instances and in that which is under discussion, it is not free from corruption.

Dr. Whitby was bound to consider whether, though we read, in this old version, at present, *Veniunt dies, in quibus vineæ nascentur*—the author of the version himself did not read in the Greek, Ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι, ἐν αἷς ἀμπελῶνες γεννηθήσονται, or something to that effect, and not ἐν αἷς ἄμπελοι γεννηθήσονται—or any equivalent expression. It is a rule with the author of this version to render word for word, in the order of the original, with the utmost attention to precision in the use of terms—whence we may infer that he read some word in his copy of the original, which answered more properly to *vineæ* in Latin, than *vitis*—which meant a *vineyard*, and not a *vine*. True it is, that *vineæ* also may mean a *vine* in Latin ; but only *per synecdochen* and *καταχρηστικῶς* ; which renders it very improbable that the author of the version would choose it in preference to *vitis*, to render so common a word in Greek as ἄμπελος, by another, equally common in Latin.

Dr. Whitby should also have considered whether what the version expresses by *decem millia*, or *dena millia*, in so many instances, was not expressed in the original by *μυριάς* or *μυριάδες*. The Latin can express a myriad as such, only by *decem millia* ; but the Greek by one word, *μυριάς*—and every scholar is aware, that nothing is more common in Greek, than the use of this

day of rest and sanctification, six others preceding, devoted to very different purposes. By each of

word, *μυριάς*, not to express ten thousand exactly, but any number, which though indefinite, is only great.

He was bound also to consider, whether, if we reflect on the peculiar connexion and opposition both of terms and ideas, in the rest of the description—where the *botrues* are said to be contained in the *flagella*; the *flagella* in the *brachia*, and the *brachia* in the *palmities*—as the proper sense of *botrues* is the *bunches* or *clusters*, and that of the *flagella* is the *sprigs*, the *shoots* or *offsets*, from the *branches* of the vine, as such—the necessity of the case does not require that if we understand these *flagella* of the *shoots*—the *brachia* of the *branches*, we must understand the *palmities* of the *vine* itself—and consequently, if the text is not corrupt, as the translator might have read *βλαστοὶ* for *flagella*, and *κλήματα* for *brachia*, so he must have read some such word for *palmities*, as *οἰναρίδες*—which would equally mean either a *young vine*, or a *branch of the vine*—a *palme*, as such.

Under these circumstances, a candid and ingenuous critic might perhaps have been led to conclude, that the general meaning of the description was to speak of vineyards, with a vast number of vines, but not necessarily ten thousand; and vines with a vast number of branches, but not absolutely ten thousand; and so in the rest of the description.

But perhaps Dr. Whitby would reply, I admit the possibility of this construction; and I allow that it has a tendency to soften the marvellous character of the supposed event. But what do you say to the particular circumstance of one grape's yielding a tun of wine—or one grain of corn's yielding ten pounds of flour? who ever heard of such monstrous grapes—or such huge grains of corn, as these?

In the first place, I suppose we may take it for granted, that Dr. Whitby presumed that a single berry from a bunch of grapes, or a single grain from an ear of corn—which were to yield all this amount of wine or flour, must be proportionably large themselves; and therefore, that he conceived the essence of the miracle, which was to account for such effects, to consist in magnifying the berry or the grain, so much beyond its natural size, to yield so much more than its natural product. But what, if this

these six days, too, before the seventh, Irenæus understands a period of a thousand years ; and there-

preconception is altogether mistaken? what, if the berry or the grain should both be no bigger than usual, yet the same result still be produced?

I confess, I see no ground whatever in the language of the original, to raise the expectation that either vines or branches, or stalks of corn, or bunches or ears, or berries or grains, should be any of them larger than natural, even while it is promised, or appears to be promised, that one berry should produce a tun of wine—one grain, ten pounds of flour. The essence of the miracle lies not in the supposed magnitude of the berry or grain—as strictly proportionate to the quantity of the wine or flour ; but in the supposed quantity of the wine or flour, as so much out of proportion to the magnitude of the berry and grain.

That we must have recourse to the agency of a power, nothing less than omnipotent, in explaining either of these phenomena, we may take for granted: that if we are at liberty to appeal to Omnipotence, either of these phenomena abstractedly would be equally possible—is also unquestionable. It requires a departure from the order of nature, to constitute a miracle ; and the order of nature may be departed from in a given way, to a greater degree or a less, which will so far entail to our apprehensions, a greater or less degree of the same miraculous effect, and a greater or less degree of the exertion of power, necessary to produce it. But to Omnipotence it is just as easy to produce a great effect of a given kind, as a little one. That a grain of corn should produce a grain of flour is no miracle ; that a grain of corn should yield an ounce of flour, is a miracle to a certain extent ; that it should yield a pound, is a miracle of the same kind, to a still greater extent: yet God Almighty can as easily cause a grain of wheat to yield an ounce of flour, as a grain ; and one pound, as one ounce, and *ten* pounds, as *one*.

The question then at issue between myself and Dr. Whitby would be this ; admitting the necessity of a miracle to account either for his construction of the phenomenon, or mine—which is the more reasonable of the two? to which of the modes of

fore, by the seventh also, which ensues at the end of all, devoted to the sabbatic reign and rest, he must,

miraculous agency should we have recourse—to that which magnifies the natural size of the grain, to be proportional to the unnatural degree of the result, or to that which multiplies the natural degree of the result, without altering the natural size of the grain ?

In answer to this question, I observe, that miraculous effects as such, that is, effects which must be referred at once to the exercise of creative power, are produced either ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων—or ἐξ ὑπαρχόντων—that is, the ὕλη, or material cause of such effects, either had no previous existence until they were produced, or it had. In the former case, we may say that the creative energy both produces its materials, and then gives them their form and shape ; in the latter, that it makes use of means already provided, it works with materials already in being—in producing the miraculous effect.

Miraculous agency of the first kind was never, that we know of, resorted to, except once, at the beginning of things, when the Deity created the materials or elements of the universe, out of nothing. After that first production—the latter became the established rule of the Divine proceedings, in their own most proper, and most immediate effects. I need not remind the reader how the Mosaic account of the creation itself, from the moment it descends into particulars, exhibits the Almighty Demiurge operating according to this rule—forming fish of the waters of the sea ; birds and winged things of the air ; herbs, trees, reptiles and beasts, and mankind himself, of the ground previously brought into being.

Under these circumstances, I should consider it much more consistent with the established principle of the Divine agency in producing miraculous effects—that it should enable a certain natural substance, as one berry of a bunch of grapes, or one grain of corn, to yield a disproportionate quantity of wine or flour—by adding to the natural measure of the produce, than by increasing the natural capacity of the substance. For this would be to produce a miracle, if I may so say, in the least miraculous manner, and to bring about a preternatural effect, after a method as near to the natural as possible : consisting in constant but

on the same principle, have understood a period of a thousand years.

insensible additions to the natural content of the substance—which would certainly be multiplied but multiplied gradually; the increments at each stage of the process, being strictly proportional to the decrements; the disproportion of the end to the beginning of the process, not lying in the parts, but in the aggregate; and the original substance apparently not growing less, rather than becoming greater, and continuing to yield or produce, without wasting or being exhausted.

I cannot better illustrate this principle, than by calling the attention of my reader to certain instances of miraculous effects, recorded in the Old Testament or the New, which Dr. Whitby himself would acknowledge to be grave and serious realities, literally to be received, exactly as they are related—yet which, in my opinion, are cases in point to the question at issue between us.

First, we read in the Old Testament, that the clothing of the Israelites for forty years, during their sojourn in the wilderness, waxed not old on their persons, nor their shoes on their feet. In what did the essence of the miracle consist, which accounts for this effect? Simply, in the fact that the very same thing which, if left to itself, would have had a power of lasting only a few months' time, was endued with a new power of lasting for forty years.

Again; we read that two grown up persons, a younger person, and more individuals belonging to the same family, subsisted for a period of time not much less than three years in all, on an handful of meal in a barrel, and a few drops of oil in a cruise. How this was effected, let scripture declare in its own language: the barrel of meal was daily consumed, but wasted not; the oil in the cruise was daily expended, yet failed not—that is, neither was once for all increased, yet neither was permitted to grow less, in bulk.

Again; we read, that meat and drink, taken at one meal, supported Elijah for forty days and forty nights. How was this? Not surely by causing the prophet to eat at once, as much as would have supported forty men for one day—but by enabling as much as would ordinarily support one man only one day, to support the same man forty days.

I shall proceed in the next place to consider the testimony of Tertullian, a Christian writer, of Africa;

Again; we read that twenty loaves, none of them sufficient for one man at a time, were set at once before a hundred men; and that they had not only enough, but to spare. Was this, by causing one loaf to become as large as five—or, without altering its sensible magnitude, enabling one to go as far as five?

Again; we read that a single pot full of oil was enabled to fill, without being exhausted, as many pots of all sizes, as the same person had of her own, or was able to borrow, on purpose, from her neighbours. Yet the oil was poured into one new vessel after another, out of the same pot—without appearing to waste, until the last pot was filled; and then, as holy writ informs us, the oil itself was stayed. Will any one deny, that this is very much the same kind of thing, as if a berry of the olive had been squozen, and made to distil, until it had filled an hogshead of oil?

But the most remarkable case in point, and that to which I would especially direct the reader's attention, is the first of the two instances of the miraculous feeding, recorded in the Gospels. Upon that occasion, five loaves of bread were rendered sufficient to satisfy a number of persons, who cannot be estimated at less than ten thousand in all. I assert this, because the number of *men* alone, was five thousand: and the number of women, and persons whether male or female, yet under the age of manhood, that is, under twenty, would equal that of the men. Besides, one of our Lord's disciples, who had an opportunity of surveying and estimating the actual number, and so of conjecturing what quantity of bread it would require to feed them, is represented as observing—two hundred *denarii* worth of bread would not suffice them, that each might receive *a little*. I will reckon *this little* at a third of an ordinary meal, three of which the ancients were accustomed to make in a day.

Now a *denarius* of money in these times, would purchase a *modius* of bread corn, and a *modius* of bread corn, at the rate of a *sexarius* and an half a day, would afford a comfortable subsistence to one man, for five days; to five men, for one day; to fifteen men for one meal in the day; and for a third of a meal, to forty-five men at once. Two hundred *denarii* worth of

and a contemporary of Irenæus; one of the last of

bread, then, would furnish one third of a meal to nine thousand men at once: and this is Philip's conjectural estimate of the number, present about our Saviour on this occasion.

Now let us suppose that any one of the five barley loaves would have served one man for a meal—for how much would it have served two thousand? The two thousandth part of a meal. Yet it was made competent to give a full meal to every one of them, and a good deal over to spare. How was this? by magnifying one loaf into two thousand times its natural bulk? or enabling one loaf to produce two thousand times its natural effect, in being broken, without being spent, and being still distributed, without being all given away?

So much, on the *credibility*, or internal evidence of the description, which Dr. Middleton considered so marvellously puerile and absurd; and Dr. Whitby called so infamous a fable. For my own part, I can discover nothing in it, which can justly be excepted against by any one, who will only concede, what is in fact antecedently probable, that under such a dispensation of things as the millenary, if it ever takes place, the goodness of God will actuate his power, and the power of God will give effect to his goodness, in every conceivable way, and to every conceivable degree—in attesting his personal part and agency in such a dispensation, and in dispensing his blessings to its proper subjects. Under such a dispensation as the millennium, compared with the state of things at present,—with what *we* call the established order of nature,—every thing may be miraculous, and at variance with that order; yet nothing extraordinary with respect to itself,—nothing at variance with its own order,—as then subsisting. The direct interposition of almighty power in a variety of ways, and in the production of a variety of effects, may be just as much matter of course then, as it is rare and extraordinary at present: and what is natural, according to our apprehension, and what is preternatural—what is agreeable to our experience, and what is contrary to it—may be so harmoniously blended in such a state of things, that it shall be hard to say which is the predominating character of the whole, and in which way the God of nature renders himself most stately and most frequently sensible—whether in his ordinary mode of

his works which have come down to us, his five

operation, according to the well-known established laws of cause and effect, or antecedent and consequent, which we call the course of nature, or in his extraordinary—in departing from them—and working results the same *in genere*, but different *in specie*, after a manner proportionably different also.

That every circumstance of the description need not be literally understood, the general import of which will suffice for all necessary purposes—is self-evident. For instance—that one bunch shall actually cry out to another, though a part of the description, is no necessary consequence; if all that is implied by this circumstance be simply, that every thing which can attract the eye in the shape of natural delights, shall then be so perfect of its kind, that it shall be difficult to choose between two things of like kind, or to say which is to be preferred to which. Literally construing this description of the times of the kingdom, only so far as concerns two positive future truths, the certainty of a prodigious display of the goodness of God, and therefore a proportionate display of the power of God, which are then to take place—why may we not suppose the rest of the passage—the choice of the sentiments, the cast of the language, the specification of particulars—to be the innocent playfulness of a prophetic fancy, warmed by the subject, and disporting itself in the pleasing contemplation of so grateful a picture?

But an objector, who is not yet satisfied, may perhaps demand, How can we conceive a state of things, in which such extraordinary, and to all appearance, such unnecessary exertions of the divine power and goodness, as making a single grape yield a tun of wine, or a single grain of wheat ten pounds of flour, can be familiar occurrences? Is not this to suppose a *waste* of power, and an *abuse* of goodness, much beyond what can be wanted, and therefore, what is credible?

To this objection, I reply, first—that it does not appear from any thing which has yet been said, whether such exertions of the divine power and goodness will take place, even under the millennium, unless there be occasion for them; and that to call them strictly an *abuse* of the divine energies in either respect, is more than we have a right to say.

books against Marcion, having been written in the

In the next place, supposing they might so be called, I would ask, whether that which is a distinguishing characteristic of the divine operations even in the present state of things, imperfect as it is, may not much more fitly be a characteristic of the state of things under the millennium? Is there no *waste* of the divine power, is there no *abuse* of the divine goodness, as it may appear to our finite apprehensions, discernible in the sub-lunary works of God? Is not profusion, boundless profusion, and variety, endless variety, each for its own sake, as far as we can see or judge, one of the established laws which regulate the exercise of creative power, and determine the measure of creative goodness, at present? It is needless to enlarge on this theme, by descending to the enumeration of particulars in the several kingdoms of nature.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born, to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

To come to the recorded instances of the exercise of divine power, in subserviency to divine bounty. As it is just as easy for infinite power to do much of a given kind of effect, as to do little; so is it just as agreeable to infinite goodness to give much of the same kind of blessing, as to give little: and as God is said to love a cheerful giver, so where he sets the example in giving, and gives spontaneously and from himself, he gives liberally, nay lavishly—he does not proceed by measure in the exercise of his power, nor œconomize and husband his riches, in the dispensations of his bounty. Were it otherwise—even the happiness of heaven, which is derived immediately from his presence, would still be incomplete; and angels and saints in the enjoyment of their Creator, would still be conscious of a craving void, which he had purposely left unfulfilled.

The œconomy of power in the production of a miraculous effect, has never been particularly remarked upon, except in the working of the miracle of the tribute money; and yet even then, though the tribute for one person merely was wanted, the means of paying it were provided for two. In other instances, though the miracle seems to be confined to a single specific effect,

fifteenth of Severus, A. D. 208. at which time Ter-

a little consideration will shew us, that besides that, a great deal more is necessarily implied in it, either before, or after, or along with it: as in giving perfect health and strength to one just before weakened, exhausted, emaciated with sickness; restoring a dead body to life, that is, reanimating the whole frame; opening the eyes of one born blind, and at the same time communicating all the ideas of sight; giving speech to the dumb, and along with that the knowledge of an articulate language—and so forth.

When God created a garden of Eden, a paradise of delights, for the first pair of mankind; he filled it full of every conceivable natural enjoyment, though as yet there were only two of his rational creation, who were intended to use and enjoy it—to feed upon its sweets, to admire its beauties, and to consume its varied productions. When he created manna for the daily support of two millions and a half of souls, in the wilderness, forty years, he did not let fall an homer full apiece, for each person only, every morning—but a great deal more, which melted as the sun grew hot, or if it lay until the next day, bred worms and stank. When he produced them water out of the flinty rock, the new created springs did not cease to flow, when they had served their immediate need, but continued to refresh the arid bosom of the desert, long after they had slaked the thirst of the people of God. When he created quails to satisfy their lust after meat, and rained feathered fowl on them as thick as dust—he caused them to lie round about their encampment a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey on that side—that is, eighteen miles in every direction—more, no doubt, by far than even that immense multitude could want or could consume, at once. When our Lord turned water into wine—he was not content to change one water-pot full only into that substance, (though each one contained twenty-five gallons—more than could have been needed for the immediate occasion,) but he changed the contents of all the six, one hundred and fifty gallons in all. When he fed the five thousand, the fragments alone filled twelve *cophini*, (each of them large enough to hold a man,) while the five loaves originally, had all been carried by one lad.

tullian himself was an old man. I shall produce a passage from this work, which is one of the most complete and elaborate of his treatisesⁿ.

“ Concerning, however, the restoration of Judæa,
“ which the Jews themselves also are led by the
“ names of places and regions to hope for, as it is
“ described, in what manner the allegorical method
“ of interpretation would be spiritually applicable to
“ Christ, and to the church, and to its constitution
“ and uses—to go through particulars is both a
“ long business, and as regularly treated of, is the
“ subject of another work of ours, which we en-
“ title, ‘ Of the hope of the faithful,’ and at pre-
“ sent may be dispensed with, simply because the
“ question is not about an earthly, but about an
“ heavenly kind of promising.

“ For we do indeed confess, that a kingdom on
“ earth is promised us; but before the time of hea-
“ ven—but in another state—because in a city the
“ work of God, Jerusalem brought down from hea-

It is not necessary, however, to pursue this argument any further. I have answered such objections to the credibility of the description, attributed to our Saviour, as seemed likely to be urged against it from the nature of the description itself—and have shewn, I think, that when rightly explained, and judged of by the analogy of the divine proceedings, whether ordinary or extraordinary, in general, there is nothing in it which is not worthy of its reputed Author, and may not be ultimately verified by the event. One further objection, which will perhaps occur as readily as any—that so abundant a supply of natural good things—corn, wine, and the like, as this description supposes under the millennium, is not compatible with the innocence, the purity, the temperance and moderation, which must also be characteristic of such a dispensation—I shall find an opportunity of answering at large hereafter.

ⁿ Lib. iii. 24. Operr. i. 178.

“ ven, after the resurrection for a thousand years.
“ This *city* both Ezekiel knew, and the apostle John
“ saw, and the new word of prophecy which we be-
“ lievers have among us, bears *it* witness, so as even
“ to have foretold the appearance of the likeness of
“ *such* a city before the reality of it, by way of sign.
“ In a word, the thing was certified upon the expedi-
“ tion into the east. For we have the testimony
“ even of the Gentiles to the fact, that every morn-
“ ing, at sunrise, for forty days a city was seen in
“ Judæa, hanging from heaven, with all its array of
“ walls, gradually vanishing as the day advanced,
“ and at other times, when close at hand, totally lost.
“ This we say is *the city* provided by God, to receive
“ the saints in the resurrection, and to refresh them
“ with an abundance of all goods, only of a spiritual
“ kind, as a compensation for those which in the
“ world we have either despised or lost. And in-
“ deed it is but just and worthy of God, that his
“ servants should there also exult and rejoice, where
“ they have been afflicted likewise, for his name’s
“ sake. This is the nature of the kingdom of
“ heaven: and when its thousand years are over,
“ the period, within which is comprehended the re-
“ surrection of the saints, rising some earlier, some
“ later, according to their deserts, then, as soon as
“ the destruction of the world and the conflagration
“ of the judgment are carried into effect, being
“ changed in a moment into the substance of angels,
“ I mean through that clothing upon of incorruption,
“ we shall be translated to a kingdom in heaven; of
“ which we are treating at present, as of a kingdom
“ not preached of with the Creator *God*, and there-
“ fore, which ascertains the Christ, by whom it was

“ first brought to light, and by whom only, *to be the Christ of another God* °.”

We shall probably be told, to raise a prejudice against this testimony, that Tertullian was now a Montanist; and that the Montanists were believers in the millennium. Whether he was ever afterwards a Montanist, is a point open to a question; though I am ready to admit, that when he wrote this treatise against Marcion, he was still so. But, allowing that having once become a convert to the pretensions of Montanus, he continued so to the end of his life, and allowing too, as fully as the most determined of his opponents could wish, that the pretensions of Montanus were vain and fantastical, or impious and blasphemous, and that he was either a visionary or an impostor—still I should contend, that Montanus' belief in the futurity of a millennium had nothing to do with his peculiar tenets in other respects; that the belief in this doctrine was no part of Montanism as such; that it was professed by numbers of Christians before the time of Montanus, and by numbers of Christians after it, any of whom would have been the foremost to condemn the dogmas of his sect in particular; in short that Montanus and his followers were believers in the millennium, because it was the current expectation of their times—not because such a belief was necessary to their peculiar opinions, but because, in every thing which did not exclusively concern their own sect, or the principles of their proper creed, they

° Cf. *Operr.* ii. 335—340, *Adv. Jud.* 14: iii. 253, *De Res. Carnis* 22: 258, *ibid.* 25: 280, *ibid.* 35: iv. 7, *De Oratione* 5. 142, *De Spectaculis* 30. 207, *De Baptismo* 19. 293, *De Anima* 37.

agreed with the body of the church, and were as orthodox as the rest. So far, then, from considering it an objection to Tertullian's opinions concerning the millennium, that he was probably a Montanist, and entertained other notions, peculiar to that sect, I should not have scrupled to adduce the testimony of Montanus himself to the same point, had it been on record—as just as good a witness to the fact of the reception of the belief, and just as much entitled to attention in that capacity, as Justin Martyr or Irenæus; neither of whom can be suspected of a leaning to Montanism, no more than Papias, who flourished before them both.

By the Creator (*God*) in the last sentence of the above passage, Tertullian understood the Demiurgus, or God of the Old Testament—between whom, and the Supreme Deity, the God of the New Testament, as revealed by Jesus Christ, the principles of Marcion, like those of Gnosticism in every shape, professed to draw a personal distinction; and the proposition, though somewhat obscure, means in general, that life and immortality, such as await the faithful, in the state of things after the millennium, that is, in heaven, having been brought to light exclusively by the Gospel, shewed the Christ by whom they were brought to light, not to be the Christ of the Demiurge, but of another God.

We see too, in that part of the sentence which precedes this, an intimation of another opinion of Tertullian's, to which, however, we are not bound to subscribe, viz. that though all the saints will rise during the millennium, they will not rise at once, but gradually or successively, and *pro meritis*. It seems also that he construed St. Paul's assurance of

our being all changed in a moment, and into the substance of angels, (agreeably, no doubt, to our Lord's doctrine of men's becoming *ισάγγελοι* "equal" to the angels,) as what would take effect on the close of the millenary period, but before the transition into heaven.

But when he refers, in the outset, to the testimony of some new word of prophecy among Christians, as having promised that the New Jerusalem, besides being seen by Ezekiel and St. John, should be exhibited in effigy or outline, as a sign or symbol of the future city; for the fulfilment of which assurance he appeals to the phenomenon of a city's being seen in Judæa, for forty days, in the air, every morning—during Severus' expedition into the east; we may presume it is to some prophecy of his party that he refers, among whom the gift of prophecy was more commonly claimed, than any other supernatural endowment. Not that, as I think there is reason to believe, the gift of prophecy had yet ceased among Christians generally, in the days of Tertullian.

To proceed, however, with the consideration of our testimonies. It appears from ecclesiastical history, that sometime before the ninth of Gallienus, A. D. 262, Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, wrote a book, of which Eusebius gives an account^p, describing its author as teaching "that the promises made to the saints in the holy scriptures, should be fulfilled rather after the Jewish fashion; and supposing that there will be a certain period of a thousand years upon this earth, to be spent in bodily enjoy-

^p E. H. vii. 23, 24. 270, D, &c. 28. 278. B. Cf. Theodoret. iv. 346. Hæret. Fabb. Compend. iii. 6.

“ment. At least,” says he, “having expected to confirm his own opinion out of the Revelation of John, he wrote a certain treatise concerning this point, which he entitled a Refutation of Allegorists (or Allegorizers.)”

He was replied to by Dionysius, the contemporary bishop of Alexandria, in a work, in two books, entitled, “Of Promises,” (*περὶ ἐπαγγελιῶν.*) The preface of the second book gave Nepos a high character, for his faith, his industry, his conversation in the scriptures; the variety of the Psalms, which he had composed, and which were in general use among the brethren: and it mentions withal that Nepos was dead before the work of Dionysius, in reply to his, appeared. The acme of Nepos, then, probably coincided with the beginning of the third century. We learn also that his work was highly esteemed; being thought to have demonstrated by irrefragable arguments, that Christ’s kingdom would be a terrestrial one.

We are further informed, that his opinions had obtained a very general reception in Egypt, especially in the Arsinoite Nome; probably because it was his own diocese, or connected with it: with the churches of which district, Dionysius tells us that he held a three days’ conference, from morning till evening, on the points at issue between himself and them; a conference, conducted on either side with exemplary temper and moderation, and ending in the renunciation of their opinions, by the advocates of the opposite party, as abundantly convinced by the arguments of Dionysius, that they were in error.

While we admire the spirit of charity and candour, in which this controversy was conducted, and

applaud the anxiety of Dionysius to recover any of the churches under his care from opinions, which he believed to be mistaken—still we may say, that perhaps had Nepos been alive to answer for himself, his party would not so easily have been silenced. It is much to be regretted, too, that we have not his own work, from which we might learn the real opinions of its author, on the subject of the millenary promises. The accounts given of them by Dionysius, Eusebius, Jerome, Theodoret, and others, are the accounts of adversaries, who might unintentionally misrepresent them, and we may take it for granted, have laid things to the charge of their author, which he would have been the first to disclaim.

For example—it would be a necessary inference from what Dionysius stated in his book, that Nepos supposed Christ was to have no kingdom, except upon earth. Now no former millenarian, as Papias, Justin, Irenæus, or Tertullian, broached this doctrine: it is very unlikely therefore that Nepos would do so. A kingdom of Christ upon earth, whether for a longer or a shorter time, is by no means incompatible with a kingdom, from all eternity and to all eternity, in heaven. The former is in fact, as the millenarians view it, part and parcel of the latter.

Again, we must have concluded from the representations of Dionysius, that whosoever espoused the opinions of Nepos on the millennium, “ must have
 “ made light of the law and the prophets; have set
 “ aside the Gospels; undervalued the Epistles; en-
 “ tertained not one sublime and exalted conception;
 “ nothing worthy of the glorious appearance of our
 “ Lord, and the manifestation of the truly incarnate

“ Divinity ; of our own resurrection from the dead, “ our gathering together unto him, and our being “ rendered like him : nothing in short, but what was “ poor and sordid, resembling the things of mortal- “ ity, time, and sense.” Such statements as these, were they justly applicable to the opinions of Nepos, would prove only that he himself had a wrong notion of the nature and design of the millenary kingdom ;—not the falsehood of the expectation of such a kingdom itself : and if they were not justly applicable to them, they would convict Dionysius of a calumny against the memory of Nepos, and against his doctrine both ; they would prove at least that he was as ignorant of the opinions of Nepos, as of the true nature of the doctrine which he opposed. And that they were not justly applicable to the opinions of Nepos, no one, who reads the character which Dionysius himself has given of his piety, and his knowledge of the scriptures, I think, can doubt.

That Nepos derived his strongest arguments in support of the doctrine from the book of Revelation, appears from the testimony of Eusebius : and that his opponent found himself more pressed by those arguments, than by any thing else, we may collect from the pains which he takes to undermine the authority of the book ; insinuating, rather than maintaining, that it was not the composition of the apostle St. John, the author of the Gospel, and of the catholic Epistle ; but of some other person, who bore the name of John.

The consideration of the arguments by which he endeavours to render this surmise probable, belongs to a work on the Canon of the New Testament, not to the present undertaking. I will observe only that

Dionysius still admits the Revelation to be the production of some holy and inspired person; (ἁγίου τινὸς καὶ θεοπνεύστου:) and it is a singular proof, how completely the eyes of common sense may be blinded in the ardour of controversy, that with that admission, he should not have seen the authority of the book to be as clear and incontrovertible, as if it were the work of St. John. The authority of any part of scripture depends upon its inspiration; and if one part is as much inspired as another, it is all of equal weight. There can be no degrees of the same quality of inspiration. The Spirit of God may speak by a variety of mouths, and write by a variety of pens: but if it is the Spirit which dictates what is said or indited, it is all of like authority. The Revelation then would possess the same claim to be acknowledged as a canonical book, whether as written by John the apostle, or by John the presbyter, or by any other John, who could be mentioned, were he but an *holy* man, and *inspired*. Yet when Dionysius was not biassed by prejudice, nor writing to silence an adversary, he could to all appearance refer the Apocalypse to the same author, as the rest of the church: which he does when he applies to the emperor Valerian, the description of Antichrist, given in that book⁹.

The authority of the book of Revelation being thus brought under discussion—this may be a proper place to say something about the literal construction of its disclosures, especially that part of them, which relates to the subject of the millennium.

⁹ E. H. vii. 10. 255. D.

The force of the arguments of Nepos, no doubt as derived from the letter of its text, appears further from the fact, that Dionysius was driven by them not to the alternative of rejecting the book; for that, as he tells us, he would not take upon him to do; but to the absurdity of contending that it was beyond the power of human comprehension; it was neither to be understood nor explained; it was merely to be received and admired, as something which contained wonderful secrets at bottom, but secrets, which no one could fathom. The passage is curious, and deserves to be produced.

“For my part,” says he, “I would not take upon me to reject the book; since many brethren esteem it highly: but, considering the work of forming an opinion about it, too great for my own understanding, I rather suppose its particular meaning to be something recondite, and too wonderful (to be comprehended). For even though I understand not what it is, I still suspect that some profound meaning lies in the words: not measuring or judging of these things by my own capacity, but leaving them principally to faith, I think them too sublime to be reached by me: nor do I reprobate, what I have not comprehended; but I marvel rather, that I have not attained even to an insight into it.”

Dionysius is not the only Christian writer, who, on the principle of Tacitus', “*Omne ignotum pro mag-nifico,*” or of Tertullian's, “*Credo, quia impossibile est,*” is disposed to admire in proportion to his ignorance; and to think the more highly of the Revelation, for not being able to understand it. “And with respect too to the things revealed to

“John,” says Origen, “who would not be astonished, when he has read them, at the concealment of its ineffable secrets, which shew themselves even to him who does not understand the things that are written^r?” It would have been well if either Origen or Dionysius had told us, why they believed that book to be inspired, which they professed to be utterly unintelligible: as if there were not as much difficulty in supposing the Spirit of God to have dictated, what it intended never to be comprehended, as in understanding the most apparently figurative disclosures, supernaturally made, in their most literal sense.

Whether the Apocalypse of St. John is capable throughout of a literal sense, is another question. Dionysius, we are told by Eusebius, after a minute examination of its contents, pronounced it inexplicable according to its outward and obvious, or grammatical meaning; and therefore, in some way or other, to be symbolically understood. But to contend that there is nothing in it, which may be very intelligible in the simple construction of the text, errs almost as widely in one extreme, as to say that there is nothing in it, which requires to be figuratively explained, would in the other.

Among those of its descriptions, which may be understood *ad litteram*; which make the best sense when so understood, and cannot without great contradiction and absurdity, be otherwise explained and construed; are its two assertions of a first and a second resurrection; of a reign of all saints on earth, consequent upon the former; and of the duration of that reign, the specified period of a thousand years.

^r Vol. i. 167. De Principiis, iv. 10.

We may challenge the most ingenious interpreter of prophecy by types and figures, to shew what possible meaning can be couched under these descriptions, but the plain and obvious one, of the matter of fact; what can be the nature or certainty of the second resurrection, which will not also be true of the first; what can be denoted by the reign of the saints upon earth, consequent on the fact of the first resurrection, but something as much a matter of fact as the resurrection itself; and in particular, what can be intended by the specified period of its duration, a thousand years, understood in a figurative or symbolical sense. Can there be such a thing as figurative or parabolic time? If not, the specified duration of the thousand years is so many years of actual time; and therefore something is actually going on, for that length of time, and something, upon earth; and something which follows on a certain resurrection of the dead. This something, the prophecy says, is a reign of Christ, in conjunction with the saints; the locality of which is upon the earth.

If this reign, then, be a matter of fact, all is consistent and uniform. An actual thousand years of time are devoted to an actual matter of fact, sufficient to occupy them while they last; and both are actually consequent on an event, which has actually preceded them. The connexion between these several contingencies is indeed indissoluble. If it is to be a literal resurrection of a part of the dead, which is first to take place, it must be a literal reign of Christ on earth, along with them, which is to follow it; and if it is to be a literal reign, which will be established upon earth, then its duration, whether longer or shorter, will be a literal duration also; and if

this duration is specified beforehand as a thousand years, the kingdom in question will last a thousand years.

But an advocate of the contrary opinions may reply; the time or duration of such and such an event must be literal or actual time, and yet the event itself may be something typical or figurative. To this, I answer, that even types or figures must have some real independent essence of their own, or they can have no actual existence. For example, the legal or Mosaic œconomy, complicated as it was, was a type or similitude of the Christian; yet no one will say that the legal or Mosaic œconomy, with its complex ritual, until the appearance of that dispensation which was symbolized by it, existed only in type or figure, and had no being or reality of its own. The possession of a typical or figurative relation to something else, is but an accident of that which has otherwise an actual existence; whereby it stands connected with other things, that also have an actual existence, whether past, or present, or to come: and in the complex of real existences, any one actual thing may bear an infinite variety of such relations to others.

Supposing then the thousand years of the millenium to be a thousand years of actual time, I should still desire to know, what is that œconomy or dispensation of things, which is conceived to be going on, while they last, even in figure; what it is in itself; as well as, of what it is figurative? It will not affect the point in dispute, nor evade the force of our question, to reply, that the thousand years are devoted to the transaction of a spiritual œconomy; that a spiritual kingdom of Christ, as such, is es-

tablished and proceeding, for that length of time, upon earth. A spiritual kingdom is an actual kingdom, as well as one which is not spiritual. A spiritual and a temporal kingdom differ only in the respective properties of their being, and not in the common condition of having a being at all ; for they must both possess an essence of their own, if either of them is to have an existence.

To say then that the millenary kingdom in the Revelation is a spiritual kingdom, is still to allow that it is actually a kingdom : and to say that it is a kingdom which must last for a thousand years, is to allow that it is a kingdom, which is yet to come. In this case, the kingdom in question, spiritual as it may be, can be no spiritual kingdom, which has yet been established ; or was so, when the Revelation was seen. It can be no such spiritual kingdom, then, as is implied in the very idea of the first formal establishment of the Christian religion ; an establishment which had been nearly seventy years in existence before the Apocalypse was written : it can be no such spiritual kingdom as Christians of every description agree in attributing to Jesus Christ, from the time of his ascension into heaven, and the foundation of his church upon earth, on the day of Pentecost afterwards.

Now what kingdom of Christ's, independent of this, and yet equally spiritual, we may very well ask, can there be still to be established—and what is more, established upon earth—and what is equally to be expected, established there in conjunction with all saints ? for all these things are asserted of the kingdom, predicted in the Revelation. I think it is not possible to return a satisfactory answer to this

inquiry ; by shewing that any spiritual kingdom of Christ, as such, can be yet to be established, other than for nearly two thousand years, has always been in existence ; or any where upon earth, within the limits of Christendom, at least, where it was not long before in being ; or in any way divided and communicated with the saints, in which way they have not already shared and partaken in it, all along.

Does this new spiritual kingdom, hereafter to be established, imply a wider propagation of the Gospel, a more general diffusion of Christianity, than have yet taken place ? But even this would be the establishment of no new spiritual kingdom of Christ ; only an extension of the bounds—an amplification as such, of the old. Besides which, whether such an increased diffusion of the Christian religion is ever yet to take place, before the establishment of the millennium itself, is a question on which we may reasonably be permitted to doubt. The limits of the spiritual kingdom of Christ have already been much circumscribed and curtailed ; and instead of encouraging us to look forward to their future enlargement again, the disclosures of prophecy compel us rather to anticipate, sometime or other, a still greater abridgment of them.

Vast and spacious as once may have been the visible boundaries of the spiritual kingdom of Christ—what large portions of its dominions have been lost, apparently hopeless of recovery ! how many fair inheritances, which once belonged to the patrimony of the Christian church, have been for ever alienated from it !

Asia Minor, Africa, Egypt, Judæa, Syria ; great

part of upper Asia, and India, were once provinces of the empire of Christ; and what are they now? and what prospect, in the eyes of human probability, of their ever being recovered to their original Lord? How much of Europe, which in the time of the Roman emperors, was Christian, has become Mahommedan, if it has not relapsed into its primitive paganism!

True it is, that other large tracts of Europe are Christian now, which heretofore were heathen: that a quarter of the globe, before unknown, America, is incorporated in the nominal communion of the church: that Christianity is revived in India, has taken root in the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific: that Gospel missionaries are actively labouring in Africa, Asia, and in all parts of the globe, Mahommedan and Pagan, to win back souls to Christ, or to add to his spiritual jurisdiction; to replant the churches which have ceased to exist, or to establish the name of Christ, where it never before was professed. All this may be very true; but what is it, taken in its utmost effect, and in its joint amount, compared with the privations and losses, which have contracted the extent, and impaired the grandeur of the same kingdom, as it was once established in the world? One integral, additional portion of the globe, in any manner brought over to the empire of Christ, and much more, in so questionable a manner as by the extermination of its original inhabitants, (for such has been the miserable fate of the aboriginal possessors of both the continents of America, and such their unjust and lawless treatment, at the hands of their European and Christian invaders,) cannot countervail the two other quarters of the world,

almost as extensive, and much more populous, Asia and Africa, which were formerly included in the same spiritual dominion of Christ, by the voluntary, unconstrained submission of their inhabitants; and have since been dismembered from it. Nor is the establishment of an isolated church, here and there, or the conversion of an handful of believers, among savages or Mahommedans, to retain a precarious existence upon a strange soil, and in the midst of enemies, whose forbearance alone, humanly speaking, averts daily and momentarily their destruction, to be contrasted with the magnitude of the spiritual triumphs, which once were achieved in the power of Christ; when the champions of the Gospel went forth conquering and to conquer; when nation after nation, and empire after empire, submitted themselves in willing subjection to the peaceful yoke of the Gospel; when kings became the nursing fathers, and queens the nursing mothers of the church; when the rising and the setting sun still shone on the cross of Christ; and throughout the limits of the civilized world, and for great part of the uncivilized also, nations and languages the most remote, and the most discordant, joined in the worship of a common Redeemer, and each in their proper tongue, and after their own manner, swelled the chorus of his praise.

That this is no exaggerated description of what was once the state of the external profession of the Gospel, and of the visible limits of the nominal church of Christ, will be allowed by all, who are conversant with the civil and ecclesiastical history of the fifth and sixth centuries, just before the rise of the Mahommedan power. If, then, the kingdom of Christ, as

comprehended within certain definite and sensible boundaries, once embraced an extent of dominion so ample as this, so much greater, at least, than what it possesses now; reason is, that we should expect to see it first restored to its original dimensions, before we could begin to anticipate any further enlargement of it, to a degree which had never before taken place, were such an enlargement of its visible bounds the event still contemplated as future, by the millenary kingdom of the Revelation.

But, perhaps, it will still be said, that the spiritual kingdom in question may be the establishment of a more genuine Christianity, than has hitherto prevailed in the world. It may be that æra in the duration of the visible church, when the principles of the Gospel will not only be acknowledged, but acted upon; when the nominal professions and the lives of Christians will no more be in discordance, but every one who is externally a Christian will be really so, and live as every true Christian ought. It may be that happy state of things, when there shall no longer be difference of sentiment, on points of faith, or diversity of practice, on points of discipline, among the members of the visible church; but all shall be equally orthodox; all shall concur in the observance of the same rites and ceremonies; all shall be closely cemented in the same bond of faith and charity; and the whole body of the faithful, like that of their blessed Master, be clothed with a mantle, without seam or rent, from the top to the bottom.

But were even this state of things to be realized in the visible church on earth, neither would even that answer to the idea of the establishment of a

new spiritual kingdom of Christ: it would be only the better establishment of the old, the fitter, more proper, and more legitimate enforcement of the jurisdiction, supremacy, or authority of that which always before existed. For Christians merely in name, and in external conformity, whose lives accord not with the principles they profess to believe and obey^s; schismatics and sectarians, who, without just cause, separate themselves from the communion of the church; heretics or heterodox, who keep not the faith as pure and unadulterated as they have received it; whatever they may be called, and whatever they may consider themselves, are no lawful subjects of the kingdom of Christ, but rather rebels and traitors, who have cast off their allegiance to it. To clear his kingdom of such, would be but to rid it of those who never paid him the obedience which they owe, and perhaps which they profess to render: to reclaim them, if possible, would be but to bring them as stray sheep to the flock, and to make better subjects of them: and were the church to be delivered at once from all such members of its external communion, and for ever secured against the risk of any future admixture of them, like the good grain freed from the tares, it would only be relieved from that which at present alloys, debases, and corrupts its purity; and prevents it from being in deed, what it is in name, and what it wishes and desires to be, *one* body under *one* head; and the holy communion of *all* true faithful or believing people.

^s Οἱ δ' ἂν μὴ εὐρίσκωνται βιοῦντες ὡς ἐδίδαξε (sc. ὁ Χριστός) γνωρίζεσθωσαν μὴ ὄντες Χριστιανοί, κἂν λέγωσι διὰ γλώττης τὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διδάγματα, κ', τ. λ. Justin. Martyr. Apolog. i. 25. 23.

Admitting, however, for argument's sake, that this better establishment, and, as it were, regeneration of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, might answer to the millenary kingdom in Revelation—is there reason to hope, that, without a miracle, it will ever be brought about by the operation of secondary causes? Are the signs of the times, and the state of things around us, so far as they give us the means of looking, with any degree of probability, into the future, such as to encourage the belief that this extraordinary change of human nature, and of the external character and constitution of society, will ever be the effect of what is called the march of human improvement; and may be expected to ensue, in due time, if the world goes on, as it has done heretofore, and as it is going on, before our eyes, at present?

That man must have a sanguine imagination, who thinks he can perceive in the state of things around him, the working of causes, which, in all probability, will gradually converge on this one desirable result; the ultimate moral and religious perfection of the human species. On this topic, it would not be proper to enlarge at present; or it might satisfactorily, I think, be shewn, that as far as human reason, from the evidence of the present, and the experience of the past, is competent to speculate on the probable turn and character of the future, the operation of such secondary causes as are now in action, is all the contrary way; and instead of pleasing the imagination with no distant or improbable prospect of a golden period in the history of human existence, when the almost infinite perfectibility of human nature will be exemplified in as unbounded an advancement in true religion, and

corresponding virtuous practice; it is calculated to fill every serious and reflecting mind, with the most melancholy presentiments of a worse state of things to come, than the world has ever yet witnessed.

But though the signs of the times in which we live, do not appear to promise this auspicious result; and though the most enthusiastic imagination can discover nothing in the operation of natural or secondary causes, which, in due course of time, is likely to bring it about; does the word of truth authorize us to expect it? for if it does, we are bound to believe it will yet come to pass; we must give up our own conviction, and hope against hope itself. Alas! the sure word of prophecy holds out no such expectation; but instead of that, just the reverse: and it is the gradual fulfilment of this contrary expectation, such as we cannot fail to observe in the signs of the times, and the natural working of the causes, which we see already in action around us, that is placed by Scripture, among the strongest and surest criterions of the approach of the end. St. Paul told the Thessalonians eighteen hundred years ago^t, that the day of the Lord could not arrive until the ἀπόστασις, or apostasy, had first taken place; and that apostasy has not yet happened, though it is certainly sometime to happen. And it may be shewn, that when it happens, it will turn out to be nothing less than the renunciation of Christianity itself; of that Christianity at least (whatever else may be substituted in its stead) which is founded upon faith in Jesus Christ, and supposes the continued, public acknowledgment of his supremacy alone, as the proper object of the religious trust and

^t 2 Thess. ii. 2—4.

eneration of his nominal followers, and as the legitimate source of the moral obligations of Christians.

To return, however, to our former subject. If no new kingdom of Christ of a spiritual kind, can yet be established on earth, which was not previously in existence; no such kingdom can be meant by that in the Apocalypse, which is to be established on the earth for a thousand years. If so, this kingdom is no spiritual kingdom, like that, at least, which exists at present; and therefore it is a literal one; and so far the disclosures of the Revelation are literally to be understood. No doubt this literal kingdom will also be a spiritual one, in the fullest sense of the word; by realizing literally every thing, which we have contended would characterise the spiritual kingdom of Christ, even at present, were it truly what it ought to be, and what it professes, even here, to be, and what it would be, even in this life, did the wickedness of men, and the malice of the Devil, permit. But then it will also be a spiritual kingdom, which Christ will govern literally and in person upon earth; as he governs his spiritual kingdom there at present, himself in heaven, and acting only by his delegates or representatives, on earth.

A figurative kingdom, like that in the Apocalypse, must suppose a figurative resurrection, of which it is the consequence: for the consequent cannot be typical, and the antecedent real. And what shall we understand by a resurrection in figure, which leads to a kingdom established in figure? This resurrection, we observe, is called the *first*; and another is mentioned, as opposed to it, and called the *second*: a portion of the dead are said to rise on that *first*; and the remainder of the dead on

that *second*. Now *first* and *second*, a *part* of a certain whole, and the *remainder*, are terms *correlative*, and suppose a subject *communis generis*. It is impossible that the *first thing* of a certain number, as the *first*, can be a nonentity, and the *second*, of the same, as the *second*, a reality. If, then, the *second* resurrection, and specified as the *second*, be a plain matter of fact, so must the *first*, specified as the *first*. Now the second resurrection is the general one; which every judicious commentator on the Apocalypse, and every orthodox Christian, I apprehend, will allow to be a real future matter of fact. How then can they refuse to allow that the first must be so too?

Moreover, the subjects of these different resurrections at two different times, are opposed, as we saw, as *part* of a certain whole to the *remainder* thereof. Now that whole is the aggregate or complex of the dead; and if this complex be a real quantity, the two parts which make it up, must be real quantities also. And on the principle of every division of a whole into its component parts, these parts must be numerically distinct, and neither of them included in the other. But, unless a part of the dead do actually rise on the former occasion, they must all rise on the second. If so, they who rise on the second occasion include those, who are spoken of as rising on the former, (yet those are called the *remainder*, and therefore should necessarily exclude these,) and they who are specified as the remainder, are in fact the whole; therefore, not only does one part include the other, but a part is supposed to be equal to the whole. These are absurdities which we cannot avoid, except by

allowing, in the plain sense of the book itself, that part of the dead do actually rise on one and a former occasion, and the rest on another and a later ; which reconciles every thing together, and makes what is otherwise flat contradiction, and impossible, perfectly consistent and possible.

What shall we further say to the souls of the martyrs, and of others, who are represented as the parties which arise in the first resurrection ? Are they really the souls of Christians, who really have suffered martyrdom, and is the resurrection in which they are restored to life, a figure, a type, a parable, a vision ? Can those who bear a part in a transaction, which without real agents or participators in it, is of course a mere phantom, be real personages ; yet the part which they sustain imaginary ? What shall we say to our Saviour Christ, who is set forth as reigning along with these persons ? or to the thrones, which are said to be seen as placed or set ; or to the sitting upon them ; or to the reign, which ensues for such and such a time ; or in short, to any one circumstance of the description, on the hypothesis that it is all transacted in figure ? Surely, Jesus Christ is a real person ; the martyrs are real persons ; thrones are real material substances ; sitting is a real bodily act ; every thing, in short, is descriptive of some reality ; to which we may apply the reverse of Dionysius' criterion ; that it is utterly inexplicable on the principle of allegory, and intelligible only on that of the plain and literal acceptance.

To return then, to the historical investigation of our testimonies. There are two ecclesiastical writers

of great authority, belonging respectively to the last half of the second century, and the first of the third, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen; of whose opinions upon the points at issue, we have yet said nothing. When, however, we consider that they were both of the school of Alexandria, and if not the inventors, yet the improvers and perfecters, of the method of explaining away the letter of the New Testament, by the allegorical or anagogical principles of interpretation, which Philo Judæus applied to the letter of the old; we shall not be surprised to find them among the opponents of a doctrine, which has no support except in the literal construction of the promises and prophecies of scripture.

As to Clemens Alexandrinus, I have met with nothing of a very decided character in his works; but we may collect what his opinions on the subject of the millenary reign were likely to be, from his mystical explanation of the sitting upon thrones, and on the right hand and on the left of Christ; and of the saints judging the people^u.

But with respect to Origen, his opinions on the same subject are very plainly declared in his work, *De Principiis*^x.

“ Some persons, therefore, refusing perhaps to be
 “ at the pains of understanding, and attaining to a
 “ certain superficial knowledge of the letter of the
 “ law, and somehow or other indulging rather their
 “ own humour and inclination, (*than any thing else*),
 “ being disciples of the letter only, think that they
 “ are to look for the fulfilment of the promises here-

^u II. 792. Strom. vi. 13. 864. Strom. vii. 10.

^x I. 104, 105 : Lib. II. xi. 2.

“ after, in bodily pleasure and luxurious enjoyment;
 “ and for that reason more particularly, they long
 “ for the possession again, after the resurrection, of
 “ such fleshly members as shall never want the
 “ power of eating and drinking, and of doing every
 “ thing belonging to flesh and blood; not following
 “ the opinion of St. Paul concerning the resurrec-
 “ tion of a spiritual body.

“ Agreeably to such principles, they add that
 “ there will be covenants of marriage and begettings
 “ of children, even after the resurrection; promising
 “ themselves an earthly city of Jerusalem, to be
 “ built up again with precious stones that must be
 “ laid for her foundations. . . . They think more-
 “ over that the aliens are to be given them, as min-
 “ isters of their delights . . . and suppose they will
 “ receive the possessions of the Gentiles to eat, and
 “ will lord it over their riches. . . . And again, after
 “ the fashion which is in this life, and after the dis-
 “ position of dignities or orders, or the excellencies
 “ of powers, which there are in this world, they
 “ think they shall be kings and princes, as those
 “ earthly ones are. . . . And to make an end in brief,
 “ according to the conversation of this life in all re-
 “ spects, they will have all things to be like *to it*,
 “ which are expected from the promises; that is,
 “ that what is, be again. Such is their mode of
 “ thinking, who though believing in Christ, yet un-
 “ derstanding the scriptures in a certain Jewish
 “ sense, have anticipated from them nothing worthy
 “ of the divine promises.”

But Origen's work, *De Principiis*, was one of the

∫ Cf. 164. Lib. iv. 8: and I. 679. B. *Contra Cels.* vi. 61.

earliest of his productions^z; and he changed his opinions on many points, before the end of his life. That he was not uniformly consistent with himself, even on the present topic, we may infer from iii. 315. D. E. *Selecta in Jeremiam*, 18: compared with i. 516. A. B. *Contra Cels.* iv. 22: the former of which asserts the future restitution of the people of Israel to their original habitations, after the destruction of Satan, or Antichrist; the latter, that we may confidently affirm, the Jews will never be restored to their former country. Yet I am ready to admit that his work against Celsus, as the last and most elaborate of his writings, is more likely to represent his real sentiments, than any other of his treatises.

The author of the *Adamantii Dialogus*, a work which has been ascribed to Origen, but, as his editor shews, was really the production of a different Adamantius, who flourished in the reign of Constantine the Great; was a believer in the futurity of a reign of Christ on earth; that is, of the millennium^a.

Whether Hippolytus, *Portuensis Episcopus*, and also a martyr, whose *Paschal Canon* was composed and published about A. D. 222: and whose antiquity consequently goes back into the latter half of

^z We may add that it contained also his most objectionable sentiments. On the subject of his errors, generally, see *Sulpicii Severi Dialog.* i. 3. This author says of him, there, *Ego miror unum eundemque hominem tam diversum a se esse potuisse, ut in ea parte qua probatur, neminem post apostolos habeat aequalem; in ea vero quæ jure reprehenditur, nemo deformius doceatur errasse.*

^a See *Operr.* i. 318. E.

the second century, may be reckoned among the advocates of the millennium, is a point which we have not data exactly to determine. In the genuine tract (*De Antichristo*), "Of Antichrist"—ascribed to him, and in the other, (*De Consummatione Seculi*), "Of the end of the world"—also ascribed to him; there is no clear proof that he held the opinions in question. But he was a commentator both on the prophecies in the Old Testament, and also on the book of Revelation; and as he leans in general to the simple and literal interpretation of the text, it is probable, that, had more of his works been extant, we should have found him among the believers in the first resurrection, and the millenary reign.

We are informed, at least, by Photius^b, that he made the *consummatio seculi*, or end of the world, coincident with the downfall and destruction of Antichrist; whose appearance he ventured to circumscribe within five hundred years from the birth of Christ. His date for the birth of Christ was A. M. 5500: and therefore his date for the manifestation and downfall of Antichrist, came within A. M. 6000.

Victorinus, bishop of Pettaw, (*Petabionensis Episcopus*), and one of the martyrs in the great persecution, A. D. 303—313, is known to have been an advocate of the doctrine of the millennium; and though nothing of his has come down to us, except a corrupt and mutilated fragment of his (*Tractatus de Fabrica Cœli*), his "Treatise on the Fabric of the Heavens," there is evidence of the nature of the opinions which he entertained on this subject, even therein.

^b 163, 164. Cod. 202.

“ That that true and proper Sabbath should be
 “ kept in the seventh millennium. Therefore the
 “ Lord hath assigned to those seven days a thousand
 “ years individually ; for so it is provided, ‘ In thy
 “ eyes, O Lord, a thousand years *are* as one day.’
 “ A thousand years individually then are appointed
 “ in the eyes of God ; for I know of seven eyes of
 “ the Lord. Wherefore, as I have observed, that
 “ true Sabbath will be in the seventh millennium,
 “ in which Christ is to reign with his elect^c.”

None of the fathers has been more diffuse on the subject of the millenary kingdom, or more particular in describing the times and events before and after it, than Lactantius ; whose acme is A. D. 300. I think it unnecessary to produce more than one passage from an author, so full of testimonies to the points at issue.

“ Let the philosophers, therefore, who reckon up
 “ thousands of ages from the beginning of the world,
 “ understand, that the sum total has not yet reached
 “ the six thousandth year ; and when that number
 “ is complete, an end must be made of the present
 “ state of things, and the condition of humanity be
 “ moulded anew for the better As then all the
 “ works of God were finished in six days, the world
 “ must continue in its present state, through six ages,
 “ that is, six thousand years And again, as, when
 “ his works were finished, he rested on the seventh
 “ day, and blessed it, it follows that upon the end
 “ of the six thousandth year, all evil and wickedness
 “ must be wiped away from the earth, and justice
 “ reign for a thousand years, and the world enjoy a

^c Rel. Sacræ iii. 238. 5.

“ calm and repose from the labours, it has now so
 “ long endured And as man was then created
 “ mortal and imperfect, of the dust of the earth, to
 “ live a thousand years in this world, so is he now
 “ formed for perfection of this earthly state of being,
 “ that being made alive by God, he may rule in this
 “ same world a thousand years^d.”

As Lactantius was instructed in his knowledge of Christianity by Arnobius, it is not very improbable that his opinions on the subject of the millennium were imbibed from his master; and therefore that Arnobius also may be reckoned among the advocates of our doctrines. In his work, however, against the Gentiles (*Adversus Gentes*), written about A. D. 250, I have not met with any distinct traces of his sentiments on this particular question, either adverse, or favourable to it.

Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea in Phrygia, who flourished in the first half of the fourth century, is also to be reckoned among the most strenuous advocates of the millenary doctrines. Epiphanius gives this account of his opinions, which, however, is to be received with caution, as derived from the report of others, and perhaps somewhat misrepresented. “ Others however asserted the old man to
 “ have said, that in the first resurrection we shall
 “ fulfil a millenary period of some sort, living in
 “ the same conversation as now also, observing
 “ both the law and other things, and every particular of the use of *things* in the world; commu-

^d *Divin. Institt.* vii. 14. 642: *De Vita Beata.* Cf. *Lib.* iv. 7. 327: 12. 345: 26. 396:—vii. 2. 599: 15. 646—26. 674. *Epitome.* 10. 703—11. 707. *De extremo judicio Fragm.* 912.

“ nicated both in marriage and circumcision, and
 “ so forth; which I could scarcely believe of him,
 “ though as some persons assured me, they asserted
 “ him to have said so^e.”

Notwithstanding the incredulity of Epiphanius, there is no doubt that Apollinarius really maintained the belief in question: though not perhaps every article of it, as it is thus stated. Theodoret is perpetually lashing his errors and absurdities, as he supposed them, on this point; and Jerome enumerates him among the latest and most influential of the advocates of a temporal reign of Christ on earth, up to his time. One passage from Jerome relating to him, I shall produce the rather, because it mentions the name of another millennarian, who belongs to the fourth century, Sulpicius Severus^f.

“ For neither do we, according to Jewish fables,

^e I. 1031. A. B. *Dimœritæ*, 26.

^f That Sulpicius Severus believed in the reign of Christ with the saints, upon earth, may be inferred from his *Sacræ Historiæ*, ii. 4. where he is recounting that part of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its exposition, which related to the *stone*: *Regnum . . . aliud incorruptum atque perpetuum, id est, futurum seculum, quod sanctis paratum est, confirmavit. de quo uno, he adds, adhuc quorundam fides in ambiguo est: non credendum de futuris, cum de præteritis convincantur.*

In the extant dialogues of Sulpicius, where Gallus is one of the speakers, there is no express declaration of faith in the millenary kingdom, though it may be collected, perhaps, from Dialogue ii. cap. 16. in the part relating to Antichrist. But Jerome refers to *one* of his dialogues, as such, dedicated to his friend Gallus, and called after him; whereas, though Gallus is a party in the three which are extant, the first is entitled, *De Virtutibus Monachorum Orientalium*; the second and third, *De Virtutibus B. Martini*. The dialogue referred to by Jerome was consequently a distinct work, and is now lost.

“ which they call the Mishna (*δευτερώσεις*,) expect
 “ from heaven a Jerusalem decked with jewels, and
 “ of gold; nor are we again about to suffer the
 “ outrage of circumcision; nor to offer victims of
 “ bulls and rams; nor shall we sleep in the rest
 “ of the sabbath day: as we are promised, both by
 “ many *others* of our Latin writers, and especially
 “ by Tertullian, in his Treatise of the hope of the
 “ faithful; and by Lactantius, in the seventh book
 “ of his Institutions; and by Victorinus, bishop of
 “ Pettaw, in his frequent Expositions; and not
 “ long since by our Severus, in his Dialogue entitled
 “ Gallus: and to mention some Greeks, and to join
 “ together the first and the last of the number, by
 “ Irenæus and Apollinarius^g.”

A considerable part of the Commentaries of Apollinarius on the book of Daniel, and on the Revelation, is preserved in the *Scriptores Deperditi*, of Angelo Maio^h; which shews him to have been an acute and sagacious interpreter of prophecy; and to have penetrated into the meaning of many things, which had escaped former or contemporary expositors.

It is true he was reputed the author of an opinion, which gave name to the sect of the *Dinœritæ*; viz. that the divine Logos assumed at the incarnation a real human body, but not the reasonable human soul; though each was alike necessary to the integrity of human nature. In other words, that the divinity was to Jesus Christ instead of a soul. He was dead, however, before the fact of his entertaining such an opinion came to the knowledge of

^g III. 952. *ad prin.* in Ezech. xxxvi. Cf. iv. Pars ii. 109, SS. Eccles. Catalog. 18.

^h I. pars 2^{da}.

Epiphanius; who gives him the highest personal character, calling him, “ the grave and venerable
 “ senior, alike respectable for his age and his cha-
 “ racter, the ever beloved by us, and by pope Atha-
 “ nasius of blessed memory, and by all orthodox
 “ persons :” (ὁ πρεσβύτερος καὶ σεμνοπρεπής, ὁ ἀεὶ ἡμῶν ἀγα-
 πητός, καὶ τῷ μακαρίτῃ πάπῃ Ἀθανασίῳ, καὶ πᾶσιν ὀρθοδό-
 ξοις :) and he declares, he would rather believe his
 hearers must have mistaken his meaning, than that
 one so learned, and so conversant in the scriptures,
 could have taught any thing inimical to the truthⁱ.
 Yet he doubtless maintained such a doctrine; or
 something not sufficiently guarded, to be secure from
 misconstruction.

The great Augustin also, by his own confession,
 was once a millennarian; and would have continued
 so, could he have reconciled the notion of a tempo-
 ral kingdom of Christ, with the existence and essen-
 tial properties of a spiritual one likewise. Augus-
 tin’s acme is A. D. 400.

In his work, *De Civitate Dei*, after quoting the
 passage from Revelation, which relates to the first
 resurrection, he proceeds^k: “ They, who have been
 “ induced, from these words of this book, to sup-
 “ pose that the first resurrection will be a bodily
 “ one, among their other reasons, have been swayed
 “ chiefly by the numerical mention of a thousand
 “ years, as if something like a sabbatism, or enjoy-
 “ ment of a sabbath, for that length of time, were
 “ bound to take place in such wise among the saints,
 “ that is, with a holy dispensation of rest, after the
 “ labours of six thousand years, since man was cre-

ⁱ I. 996. *Dimœritæ* 2.

^k *Opera*, vii. 580. lib. xx. 7.

“ ated : . . . that, forasmuch as it is written, ‘ One
 “ day with the Lord *is* as a thousand years, and a
 “ thousand years as one day,’ when six thousand
 “ years, as if six days, are over, a seventh day, like
 “ that of the sabbath, should follow in the last thou-
 “ sand years; to celebrate this sabbath forsooth,
 “ the saints rising again. This opinion, notwith-
 “ standing the objections to it, might perhaps be
 “ tolerable, were it supposed that in that sabbath,
 “ the saints would derive from the presence of the
 “ Lord, any delights of a spiritual nature. For even
 “ we were once of this opinion. But as they say,
 “ that those who shall then have risen again, will
 “ spend their time in most immoderate carnal feast-
 “ ings, wherein the quantity of meat and drink is such
 “ as not merely to keep within no bounds, but to go
 “ beyond the incredible itself; on no principle can
 “ those things be believed, except by the carnally
 “ minded. They, on the other hand, who are spi-
 “ ritually minded, call those believers in those things,
 “ by a Greek term, *Chiliasts*; and we may name
 “ them, word for word, *Millennarians*.”

Stephen Gobarus, in his work on the collection
 and arrangement of contrary opinions, as maintain-
 ed by different ecclesiastical writers, reckoned the
 belief in the futurity of a millennium as one, and
 its opposite, as another, both of which had their
 advocates in the church¹. “ That the just will rise
 “ first, and together with them all animals, and
 “ enjoy themselves for a thousand years, eating and
 “ drinking, and begetting children, and after this
 “ the general resurrection will come on. And, on

¹ Phot. Bibl. 288. 35. *ad sinistr.* Cod. 232.

“ the contrary, that there is no rising beforehand of
 “ the just, nor the millenary enjoyment, nor the
 “ marrying, *in question.*”

Perhaps we may infer, too, from the same writer^m, that the opinions of Gregory of Nyssa coincided in general with those of Papias and Irenæus.

I do not think it necessary to pursue the historical investigation of testimonies to the fact of the reception of the doctrine of the millennium, in the church, any lower than we have now brought it: and for the remainder of this second part of our discussion, I shall direct the reader to other considerations of a more general kind, yet such as bear upon our proper subject, and lend their support to the conclusions already established.

The date of the birth of our Saviour, most generally received among the fathers of the church, was either the supposed middle point of the sixth millennium of the world's existence, or some time during its last five hundred years: of which opinion a variety of proofs and illustrations might be collected.

Another persuasion, also very common among them, and of which we have seen sufficient evidence in several quotations, already adduced from their works, was that the duration of the world's existence was to be limited to six thousand years in all. We find Jerome observing upon the origin of this opinion, where he is discoursing on Psalm xc. 4: “ I
 “ think that the practice of calling a thousand years
 “ as one day, was derived from this passage, and
 “ from the Epistle which bears the name of Peter
 “ (2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.) the apostle; viz. that as the

^m Loc. cit. 291. 18. *ad sinistr.* et sqq.

“ world was created in six days, it should be believed to subsist six thousand years only, and afterwards the seventh number, and the eighth, to come, in which the true sabbatism or period of rest is transacted, and the purity, of which circumcision was the symbol, is restored °.”

A multitude of passages might be cited from the writings of the fathers, both early and late, all speaking of the end of the world as at hand, and its age in their time as the sixth millennium drawing to a close ^p: cf. Barnabæ Ep. xv. apud PP. Ap. 12, 13—Hermæ Pastor lib. i. Visio iii. 8. Ibid. 41—Irenæus v. 28. 444. 23—445: 29. 447. 2—Cyprian De Exhortatione Martyrii 168. *ad prin.*:

° II. Pars i. 698, *ad calcem*: Epp. Criticæ. Ep. ad Cyprianum.

^p Judas, a commentator on the prophecy of the seventy weeks, which he brought down to the tenth of Severus, A. D. 204. thought the arrival of Antichrist was then at hand—Eus. E. H. vi. 7. 208. C. D.: Hieronym. iv. Pars ii. 115: De SS. Eccles. 52. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in like manner, as we saw, applied to Valerian, the description of Antichrist in the Apocalypse.

Hieronym. iii. 1522. *ad calcem*: in Matt. iv: Siquidem in consummatione sæculorum in reprobationem peccatorum, per hostiam suam Salvator noster apparuit: et undecima hora ad conducendos operarios venit, et completa illius passione Johannes loquitur: *Novissima hora est*: in sex millibus enim annis, si quingenti anni per horas diei singulas dividantur, novissima hora consequenter dicetur tempus fidei gentium.

Augustin, ii. 747. De fine sæculi, Ep. excix. 17. quotes the same verse, with the same kind of comment on it: Quod nonnulli sic accipiunt, ut sex annorum millia constituent velut unum diem, eumque in partes velut horas duodecim partiantur, ut sic quingentos annos postremos hora videatur habere postrema: in quibus annis jam Johannes, inquit, loquebatur, quando novissimam horam esse dicebat. Cf. capp. 18—20.

167. *ad prin.*: Ad Demetrianum 187. *ad prin.*: Ep. 58. 120. 124: Ep. 59. 139 — Incertus auctor de Montibus Sina et Sion (apud Cyp. Opera) 36: De Pascha Computus (Ibid.) 68 — Lactantius vii. 14. 643, 644 — Hilarius Pictaviensis Episcopus 562. E. F. in Matt. Canon xx: cf. 312. F. De Synodis adv. Arianos — Chrysost. i. 120. C. Hom. x: 309. A. Hom. xxvii: v. 566. D. Sermo xlvi: Comm. in Nov. Test. i. 263. A — D. in Matt. Hom. xxi: ii. 216. A — end. in Joh. Hom. xxxiii. &c. Theophyl. iii. 413. B. in 1 Joh. ii. 18.

Lactantius, following the received chronology of his time, goes so far as to declare that the coming of Antichrist, and the commencement of the millenary period, could not be delayed much beyond two hundred years after his own time^q which was, (as we have seen,) A. D. 300.

Cyrill of Jerusalem, likewise, who flourished in the reign of Constantius, in the first half of the fourth century, after dwelling at considerable length on the same topics, takes leave of his subject in terms which imply that he thought the appearance of Antichrist, and the end of the world, might come to pass in the days of his hearers, or of their children at least^r. “ Make thyself secure, therefore, O man. “ Thou art possessed of the signs of the Antichrist: “ and do not remember them thyself only, but communicate them also liberally to others. If thou “ hast a child according to the flesh, begin to admonish him already: and if thou hast begotten “ one by elementary spiritual instruction, make him “ too, secure beforehand, that he may not receive the

^q Opera, 671. vii. 25.

^r Opera, 214. 29. Catheches. xv. 8.

“ false *one* as if he were true. For the mystery of
“ iniquity is already working. The wars of the
“ nations alarm me; the schisms of the churches
“ alarm me; the brethren’s hatred of brethren alarms
“ me. And let these things indeed be said: but
“ God forbid, they should be fulfilled in our time.
“ Nevertheless, let us make ourselves secure.”

It is very true, as the above references abundantly demonstrate, that the fathers endeavour to confirm their opinion of the world’s supposed duration, and of the mystical import of the six days of creation, by the authority of the psalm in question, and by the text of St. Peter, which supplies a further comment upon it. Nor is it impossible that the opinion itself, as Jerome insinuates, might be derived originally from these two authorities. But if such was the case, it follows that the notion in question has a good *a priori* claim to be considered a Christian and evangelical opinion; which the fathers who entertained it, need not be supposed to have borrowed from the Jews; as they are sometimes said to have done. It is at least certain, that they no where refer the grounds of the opinion to a similar belief of the Jews; that they never think of supporting or confirming their own persuasion, whether of the past or of the future duration of the present system of things, by any like persuasion of the Jews. Whether the Jewish rabbis, then, might have conceived a corresponding belief on the same points, would be nothing to our purpose at present. They were at liberty to reason from the text of the Psalmist, just as the Christian fathers did; and their drawing the same conclusion from the same premises, as the fathers, would not prove that the fathers

borrowed it of them, no more than that the fathers taught it them.

On the same principle, too, that the six days of creation antecedently, were construed to stand symbolically for so many thousand years, as the destined period of the subsequent continuance of things created; and the seventh day of rest from the work of creation, to be the emblem of a millenary sabbath, which was to follow upon the consummation of the present state of things, but to precede its transition into eternity; the *ogdoas*, or first day of a new symbolical week, was considered to be typical of the commencement of eternity itself. And as the ancient Jewish sabbath, or seventh day of the week, was supposed to be emblematical of the intervening period between the end of time, and the beginning of eternity; so was the Christian sabbath, the Lord's day, or first day of the week, considered the type of this *ogdoas*, or new *æra* and course of things, destined to subsist without change through all eternity^s.

We observe an allusion to each of these periods, the septenary and octonary alike, in the passage produced above from Jerome. But language like that which he employs, is most natural in the mouth of the advocates of the millennium; of which number, Jerome certainly was not one. On their principles only, can the *hebdomas* or seventh day as such, be considered the appropriate symbol of the grand sabbatic rest; the closing scene of the present scheme and condition of the sublunary works of God; and

^s Rel. Sacræ iii. 76. Concilium Carthaginense iii: and p. 250. Annot. ad 237. l. 23.—Steph. Gobarus. Phot. Cod. 232. p. 289. 23. *ad dext.*—Methodius apud Phot. 310. 22. *ad dext.* Cod. 237.

the spiritual ogdoas, the true dies Dominica or Lord's day, be most justly recognised as the type and emblem of the beginning and decursus of an endless eternity; especially where, as among the fathers of the church anciently, almost without exception, was the case, both by the advocates and the opponents of the millenary doctrine itself, the antecedent duration of the world in its present constitution, was agreed upon to be six thousand years. Yet another anti-millennarian, Augustin, holds, in this respect, the same language as Jerome^t.

If the antiquity of the epistle of Barnabas is as great as has been supposed, and as we must ascribe to it, if it was written in the time of the author whose name it bears—then that is the earliest Christian document, in which the doctrine of the mystical signification of the six days of creation first distinctly appears. And indeed, the epistle bears internal evidence of its own antiquity, by whomsoever it was written: for the war of the Jews, and the destruction of the temple, are alluded to in it apparently as recent events^u. Nor does its author seem to have been acquainted with the book of Revelation, which in fact, in the time of Barnabas, or of any of his contemporaries, was not yet in being; though he shews that he was not ignorant of St. Paul's prophecy of the man of sin, and doctrine of the mystery of iniquity, as we may collect from the phraseology employed, cap. 15. "The season of the iniquitous one," (τοῦ καιροῦ τοῦ ἀνόμου,) and cap. 18. "The ruler of the season of iniquity," (ὁ ἄρχων καιροῦ τῆς ἀνομίας.) And he too speaks of the end of the world, or the coming of the Lord, and the destruc-

^t VII. 702. De Civitate Dei xxii. 30. 5. ^u Cap. 16.

tion of all things, along with the evil one, as at hand ^x: and this also is a presumptive proof of his high antiquity.

Now his language, in speaking of the days of creation, of the seventh day of rest, and of the eighth day, the first of a new week, or period, is sufficiently clear to imply that he must have expected the intervention of the millenary rest, before the transition of the things of time and sense, into those of spirit and eternity. For, after quoting Gen. ii. 2: he proceeds ^y, “Observe, my children, what it means, ‘He made an end in six days.’ It means, that the Lord God will make an end of all things in six thousand years.” He then applies the text of the Psalmist, and afterwards goes on: “And he rested on the seventh day. This means, that when his Son shall come, and shall destroy the season of the iniquitous one, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall he thoroughly rest on the seventh day.”

The original in the sequel is very corrupt; but, after some intermediate matter, which implies that the saints have *previously received the promise*, there being no longer iniquity, but all things having become new of the Lord, it subjoins, quoting Isaiah i 13: “Observe, how he saith, The sabbaths that now are, are not acceptable to me: but those which I have made, when after having put an end to all things, I shall make a beginning of an eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore also we observe the eighth day unto rejoicing, wherein Jesus also rose from the dead; and having been manifested, ascended into the heavens.”

^x Cap. 21.

^y Cap. 15.

In the Lexicon of Suidas, sub voce *Τυρρήνια*, we meet with the following passage :

“ A learned man among them wrote an history.
 “ For he said, that God, the Creator of all things,
 “ was pleased to appoint unto all his creatures
 “ twelve chiliads, (or *thousands of years*,) and ex-
 “ tended (or *disposed*) these chiliads in the twelve
 “ houses, as they are called. And that in the first
 “ chiliad, he made the heavens and the earth. That
 “ in the second, he made this visible or sensible
 “ firmament, having called it heaven. That in the
 “ third, *he made* the sea, and all the waters which
 “ are in the earth. That in the fourth, *he made*
 “ the great luminaries, viz. the sun and moon ; and
 “ the stars. That in the fifth, *he made* every soul
 “ of flying *things*, and creeping *things*, and four-
 “ footed *things*, (*καὶ τετράποδα. leg. καὶ τετραπόδων*,) in
 “ the air, and on the earth, and in the waters.
 “ That in the sixth, *he made* man. It appears
 “ then, that the first six chiliads had transpired be-
 “ fore the formation of man, but that for the re-
 “ maining six chiliads the race of mankind continues
 “ in being (*διαμένειν*) : so that the whole length of
 “ time unto the consummation (*τῆς συντελείας μέχρι*
 “ *transpose μέχρι τῆς συντελείας*) is twelve chiliads.”

Kuster expresses his surprise, from what quarter Suidas obtained this extract. No doubt, says he, from some author who has perished. Its remarkable agreement with the Mosaic account of the order and productions of the creation, may seem to imply that it is ultimately to be referred to that ; yet, if any intimation to such an effect had been found in his author, Suidas, we may presume, would not have failed to observe, and mention it. The language of

the original in some respects approximates to that of the Septuagint; as in *στερέωμα*, for firmament; and *πᾶσαν ψυχὴν*, for every living thing. In another respect, too, it approaches to the phraseology of the Christian writers; as in the use of *συντέλεια*, for the end or consummation of all things. But with respect to such circumstances of peculiarity in the diction of the passage, as these, we know not, whether we have the actual words of the original, or, what appears to me more probable, only Suidas' report of the substance of them: and Suidas was a Christian, familiar with the phraseology both of the Old and of the New Testament^z.

There is another extract in the Lexicon, under the article *Σύλλας*, which professes to be taken from Livy and Diodorus^a, and shews that a notion prevailed among the Tyrrhenians, to this effect; that the number of successive *γένη*, or races of mankind, differing in their laws and manners, was eight; and that the duration assigned to each of them by the Divinity, was something fixed and definite, being measured by the revolution of an *annus magnus*, or great year. It is implied in this tradition that, after eight of these *anni magni*, or great years, each generation of mankind would have had its appointed turn of existence, and the whole come to an end. So far, then, this fragment seems to speak a lan-

^z In one instance, indeed, the language of the passage resembles that of judicial astrology; viz. where it alludes to the "disposition of the chiliads *τοῖς ἑβ. λεγομένοις οἴκοις*. The fathers were none of them, as far as I have observed, believers in judicial astrology; and therefore it is not likely that any of them would employ such language as this.

^a Cf. Diodor. Oper. x. 201, 202. Fragm. lib. xxxvii.

guage like that of the consummation spoken of in the other. We are not, indeed, told what length the Tyrrhenians assigned to their great year: but, as the magnitude of this year is very differently represented by different authorities, the Tuscans might suppose it to be such, that eight revolutions of that year, might nearly occupy a period of six thousand years.

Photius in his account of Methodius' work *περὶ γεννητῶν*^b, concerning things which have been created, subjoins the following extract from Origen, probably because he met with it therein.

“ How that Origen, after having said much about
 “ the eternity of the universe, subjoins as follows also:”
 “ Neither then did man, as some say, come into the
 “ world with Adam, before not being in existence,
 “ *and* then first formed, nor again, did the world
 “ begin to be created, six days before the birth of
 “ Adam. And should any one be inclined to dispute
 “ these things, let him first consider whether the
 “ time from the creation of the world, according to
 “ the book of Moses, will not be easy to be reckoned
 “ up by those who construe that book accordingly; in
 “ this case also the voice of prophecy crying out,
 “ ‘ Thou art from everlasting and unto everlasting:
 “ for a thousand years in thine eyes are as yester-
 “ day, which is passed, even a watch in the night.’
 “ For if a thousand years in the eyes of God are
 “ circumscribed into one day, six days is the sum
 “ total of all, from the creation of the world down
 “ to our time, as they aver, who are skilled in the
 “ science of reckoning. For the six thousandth
 “ year from Adam, they say, comes down to the pre-

^b Pag. 304. lin. 34. Cod. 235.

“ sent day: for in the seventh day, in the seven
 “ thousandth year, the judgment, they say, will
 “ come. If so, the number of days in all, reckoned
 “ back from our time to the day in the beginning
 “ when God made the heavens and the earth, is
 “ thirteen.”

Origen, as we are informed, was a præadamite; and therefore a believer in the existence of creatures, the work of the divine power and goodness, anterior to any part of the Mosaic œconomy. But I have cited the above extract to shew, that, independent of this belief, he considered the six days of the Mosaic creation to stand for six thousand years; and the whole duration of the present sublunary system, from its beginning to his own time, to be twelve or thirteen thousand years.

When we consider the multifarious reading of Origen—a reading, equalled only by the number and variety of his writings—perhaps we may think it not improbable that he had seen the Tuscan history, quoted by Suidas. Or shall we suppose, on the other hand, that the Etrurian historian derived his cosmogony from Origen? The peculiar chronology of that cosmogony is far from being a common notion. Nothing is more usual than for Jewish and Christian commentators both, to agree in construing the Hexaëmeron, or six days of creation, as typical of so many thousand years; but to suppose that each of these days was actually a thousand years in length, or that the work of creation, which the Mosaic account represents, apparently, to have taken up only six days, actually occupied six thousand years in all; is an opinion, of which it would be difficult to meet with the traces either in Jewish

or in Christian writers excepting in these instances. The chronology received among Christians has always been either the Septuagint or the Hebrew; and among the Jews as such, the rabbinical; each of them, systems of time considered to bear date from A. M. 1. with the first day of creation: the longest of them not so much as six thousand years before the common date of the birth of Christ, and the shortest, which is the rabbinical, not so much as four.

We should not be justified in taking it for granted that the unknown Tuscan authority was giving, in his cosmogony, an abstract of the six days' productions of the Mosaic narrative, or assigning to each of these days in particular, the duration of a thousand years; for that would be to assume the point at issue, that he was actually acquainted with the Mosaic account; and besides, from whatever quarter he obtained the knowledge of his facts, in the order and succession of his creation he supposes every thing to be brought into being, not in so many days, but in so many thousands of years, respectively. Under these circumstances, we may still express our surprise, with Kuster, what could be the original source of this remarkable passage: and instead of indulging in conjectures whence it might be derived, I shall be content with proposing it to the consideration of the curious, whether the discoveries of modern science in the department of geology, by bringing to light a variety of facts, leading to the conclusion that the Mosaic creation as such was not the first or original creation, do not tend to illustrate the truth of an original tradition, that the world had been in existence a longer or a shorter time be-

fore the commencement of the Mosaic cosmogony—which possibly might be six thousand years.

Origen indeed spoke of a seventh millennium, dated from the Mosaic cosmogony—a thirteenth, from the beginning of all things: in which, as he tells us, the judgment was to take place. Origen was no millenarian; yet his language, in this instance, is like that of one who was. There could be no thirteenth day, from the first day of creation, and no seventh from the creation of Adam, such in extent as he supposes, which was not to be devoted to the intervention of the millenary rest; that interval of pause, between the termination of the sublunary scheme, and the commencement of eternity. Now the advocates of the millenary dispensation all speak of the end of the world, τὴν συντέλειαν τοῦ αἰῶνος, as coincident with the expiration of the sixth millennium of its existence, and as the first point of the seventh; therefore, it is no objection to the value of the Tuscan tradition, that it also does the same. No doubt the arrival of the world's seventh millennium, if followed by such a dispensation as that of the millenary kingdom, will strictly be a συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; that is, of the present state of things: and because it will be so, our Saviour calls it the παλιγγενεσία, or regeneration. A making of things anew, a regeneration of any kind, must imply a termination of the old, a consummation of what was previously in existence. Yet even that, notwithstanding, may be only the bringing of things back to the original state, designed by the Author of their being; and as opposed to their corrupt and depraved condition at present, only to their natural and proper state. Such a bringing of things back

to their first estate, is, consequently, no beginning of any thing absolutely new, but simply the complete recovery of that which before was partially, but not fully, possessed. The most acute of the philosophers of antiquity lays it down as a principle, that nothing is according to nature, which is mixed up with imperfection: and that the natural state of any subject, is the utmost perfection of which it is capable. The world regenerated at the millennium then, however highly improved and exalted, and therefore however widely discriminated from the world at present, will still be this world only in its natural state.

The question of the appointed duration of the present state of things is, indeed, intimately connected with that of the expectation of a millennium. Only let it be granted, that the system which was brought into being at the Mosaic creation, was intended to subsist for six thousand years, in imitation of the six days' period of the creation; and there seems to be reasonable ground to infer, that it will be followed by another state of things, designed to endure for a thousand years more, answerable to the seventh day which followed upon, and concluded the six. It is very true, that numbers of the fathers admitted the first of these positions, who did not adopt the second: not therefore, because they were disposed to dispute the truth of the premises, but because prejudice, or some other feeling, was too strong to allow them to draw the conclusion. The institution of a sabbath consecrated the seventh day; the institution of the sabbatic year consecrated the seventh year; and the institution of the jubile consecrated the seven times'

seventh year; as times and seasons, expressly to be appropriated to the celebration of a typical rest. These institutions are past, and having fulfilled their purpose, in respect of the Jews, are now determined and ceased. But the writer to the Hebrews has told us, that notwithstanding the work of creation had long before been ended, and notwithstanding the people since the time of Joshua, had long been settled in their temporal inheritance; there yet remained a sabbatism, or dispensation of rest, to come, even in the time of David: and though the work of redemption was completed once for all, and though the entrance into the promised Canaan had been already opened to the people of God by the Captain of their salvation, the spiritual Joshua, Christ, there remains a sabbatismus still^c.

It is not my intention to enter upon a comparison of the Hebrew or Bible chronology, with that of the Septuagint, or with any other, that may be set up against it. I have declared my opinion on the comparative merits of these rival systems, elsewhere^d; and I have seen no reason to retract the preference, which I there expressed, in favour of the Hebrew computation of time. I am aware that, as based upon the Septuagint chronology, all arguments in favour of a seventh and final millennium, in the history of the world's existence, to be devoted to especial purposes, after six thousand years' continuance of things in their present state, would long since have been disproved by the matter of fact. We are now in the eighth millennium of the world, according to the Septuagint chronology, and yet no millenary dispensation has hitherto taken place.

^c Hebrews iii. 7.—iv. 11.

^d Vol. i. Diss. x. App.

One who has been satisfied by arguments and testimonies, which have nothing to do with merely chronological considerations, that the millenary dispensation may still be probably expected in due time, might be tempted to consider this contradiction of his doctrines by the Septuagint chronology, a very strong reason for rejecting that chronology as false, which cannot be received as true, without falsifying prophecy on a large and extensive scale, and giving the lie to so many direct and indirect testimonies of the word of God. But we are in no want of a simply negative argument like this, to overthrow the Septuagint system of time; which is capable of being upset by objections of a very different kind. I would merely observe, that no such *prima facie* objection lies against the presumptive truth of the Hebrew chronology, according to which the sixth millennium of the age of the world is still current, and what is to happen at the end of that, time only can decide. It may be the event, which the millennarians expect, and it may be not: but whatever it is to be, the *experimentum crucis*, which, on the principles of the millenary theory, will stamp the Hebrew chronology as true or false, has not yet been tried with respect to that chronology, as it has with respect to the Septuagint.

Assuming, for argument's sake, the authenticity of this system of chronology; I would demand of the opponents of the millenary doctrine, by what accident it has happened, that without any straining of particulars, but by the simplest and most natural arrangement of dates, the Bible chronology exhibits such remarkable events, in the order of the divine dispensations, as the call of Abraham,

A. M. 2001. *ineunte* ; as the building of the temple, A. M. 3001. *ineunte* ; and as the birth of Christ, A. M. 4001. *ineunte* : if something analogous, and not less remarkable in the order of the same dispensations, is not to happen, A. M. 6001? which we, who expect the millennium, believe will be the return of Christ in person, and the beginning of his reign with the saints, on earth^e.

The Jews had among them a traditionary prophecy, which they ascribed to Elias, (whether Elias the prophet, or Elias the rabbi, I do not undertake to determine,) the purport whereof was to promise some such division of time, in the existence of the world, as this ; and some such critical adaptation of cardinal dates in its existence, to important corresponding events, in the course of the divine dispensations : “ Two thousand years, the void—two thousand, the Law—two thousand, the Christ :” Duo millia, inane : duo millia, lex : duo millia, ὁ Χριστός. And this division of time is so far borne out by the event, that the first two thousand years of the world, as the Hebrew chronology shews, up to the call of Abraham, were without both the Law and the Gospel ; the next two thousand, dated from the call of Abraham, to the birth of the Christ, had the Law, but not the Gospel : and the third two thousand, dated from the birth of the Christ, as far as they have since been current, have had the Gospel, but not the Law. Is it not in unison with this course and succession of things, that something should yet happen, at the end of these two thousand years, to affect alike both the Law and the Gospel, and to endure either as long as both of

^e Cf. Vol. i. Diss. x. App.

them together before it; or, what is equally probable, half as long as either of them respectively? which, methinks, may very well be the union both of Jews and Christians, under such a dispensation as the millennium, and subject to something, partaking, for ought we know to the contrary, both of the Law and of the Gospel.

Independent, however, of any reference to such traditional predictions as these; whosoever considers that God does nothing in vain—leaves nothing to chance or contingency—foreknows and forecasts long before the entire scheme of his dispensations, however complicated they may seem to us—will be strongly convinced that, if the Mosaic or legal œconomy, dated from its first proper and overt commencement, the call of Abraham, was really typical of the gospel dispensation; as it must have prefigured it in other circumstances of resemblance, so it must in this, which is perhaps as important as any, the circumstance of its duration. Could the prior, symbolical, dispensation be always designed to subsist in the world, 2000 years; and must not the latter, or the real, be intended to last at least as long? If so, the Christian or gospel dispensation could never be designed to come to an end, under two thousand years at least, after the birth of Christ. And if the prior, symbolical, or legal œconomy lasted neither more nor less than 2000 years, perhaps the later, or Christian, if it truly answers to that, may be expected to last neither more nor less than 2000 years likewise.

The appointed duration of the Christian dispensation was as likely to be made the subject of prophecy, as any other circumstance of its history;

and in fact, when we have so many minute particulars in relation to it, determined beforehand not only with historical, but also with chronological exactness; it would doubtless have appeared a desideratum, had nothing been left on record, either more or less express, with reference to its entire duration. These disclosures of the future, with respect to the establishment, continuance, and termination of the most wonderful, complex, and diversified, of the dealings of God with his rational creatures, we should of course expect to be made while the existence of any such dispensation was still matter of futurity, and not when it had once begun to have a being; and therefore should look for in the prophecies of the Old Testament, rather than in the book of Revelation.

Now there was one such prophecy, in reference to this dispensation, previously on record in the book of Daniel, (the same book which communicated beforehand so many other particulars of the history of Christianity,) which we should be disposed *a priori* to say, must have been intended to define its duration from first to last. This is the prophecy of the 2300 days^f. Two thousand three hundred days, understood as years, and referred to their proper date, if only later than the time of Daniel, we might conclude, *a priori*, would extend from that date, to the end of the world, and therefore to the consummation of the Christian œconomy. A detailed examination of this memorable prophecy, would exceed my proper limits at present. I shall be content with pointing out to the reader the true date of its

^f Dan. viii. 13, 14.

commencement, as I believe ; whence the date of its consummation will follow as matter of course.

This date is the era of that dynasty of the successors of Alexander the Great, after the conquest and subversion of the Persian empire, and his own death, out of whose dominions, in the course of time, was to arise each of the personages denoted by the Little Horn, in the vision ; Antiochus Epiphanes first, and Antichrist afterwards, of whom Antiochus was the type or symbol. This dynasty was that of the Seleucidæ, or of the Greek successors of Alexander, who reigned in Syria, and Upper Asia ; and the era of the rise of the Seleucidæ is one of the best ascertained in profane history ; B. C. 312.

As the years of this era bear date from autumn, the middle point of its first year is spring, B. C. 311. Reckon forward 2300 years from spring B. C. 311, and you come to spring A. D. 1990. At this point of time, the destruction of Antichrist being over, the cleansing of the sanctuary, according to the prophecy, is to begin. But that cleansing, as it may be shewn from another prophecy, in Ezekiel^g, will last seven years ; and beginning A. D. 1990 spring, it will not be over until A. D. 1997 spring.

Now A. D. 1997, spring, referred to the true date of the birth of Christ, B. C. 4. A. M. 4001, *ineunte*^h, answers exactly to A. M. 6001, *ineunte* : that is, the beginning of the seventh millennium of the world's existence. Thus it appears that the famous prophecy of the 2300 days, or years, defines, as we presumed it would, the duration of the Christian dispensation as such, two thousand years exactly after

^g Ezek. xxxix. 9.

^h Vol. i. Diss. x. cf. App.

the birth of Christ, with the date of the beginning of the millenary period, A. M. 6001. No commentator, that I am aware of, has yet explained it on this principle; or on any other that carries with it the evidence of its truth, and is not encumbered with the greatest difficulties, nor liable to the greatest objections. I take no merit to myself, for the discovery of its true explanation, even supposing that to have been made; but entreat the reader, who approves of it, and is satisfied with it, to join with me in giving God the praise, that he has permitted the meaning of a prophecy, which has so long been hid, to be in any way, or by any instrument, brought to light.

The restoration of the Jews to favour with God, and the possession of the Holy Land, is the community of topic which connects the prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the reign of Christ upon earth, with those of the New. That the magnificent promises, contained in the Old Testament, respecting the future destinies of some people of God, are first and properly to be understood of the Jews, is almost self-evident; because, when those promises were made, there was no people of God, in the world, but they. The terms which occur so repeatedly in Isaiah, Daniel, and the rest of the prophets, of the *redeemed*, the *chosen*, the *elect*, the *holy seed*, the *saints*, or the like, were applicable at the time to the Jews alone; and therefore must be supposed to have been meant of them, in some sense or other. Nor is it necessary, in construing such terms, to take into account the possible distinction between the *literal*, and the *spiritual*, Israel; for

the holy seed, of which those promises were first made, and in whose fortunes they are still to be accomplished, even though the literal seed of Abraham, is the spiritual also. The spiritual seed of Abraham are all they, who inherit the faith of Abraham; and even the literal seed, which inherits this quality of their natural progenitor, is as much his spiritual seed, as the faithful Gentile, who has no natural claim to be any thing else.

In their opinion, who acknowledge both a general and a particular providence, by which the fortunes of nations, as well as of individuals, are controlled and moulded in the manner that seems best to the divine wisdom, the continued preservation of the Jewish people, for eighteen centuries, since the dissolution of their civil and religious polity, and their total dispersion among the other communities of mankind, may justly be considered an argument that something is yet to befall them, to which their continued preservation, as an isolated people, was previously necessaryⁱ. But what, we may ask, is this? Doubtless, among other things, their future conversion to Christianity, will be the reply. But this reply does not go far enough; it states part of the truth, but not the whole—which may justly be supposed the final design of Providence, in still preserving the Jews, as a distinct people.

ⁱ This preservation appeared to Celsus so improbable an event, that he ventured to predict the extinction of the Jews as a nation, ere long after his time; which is one, among other arguments, to prove that he wrote his work against Christianity, in the reign of Hadrian, or soon after it, having witnessed the second rebellion of the Jews, and seen what had been its consequences to them, as a people. Origen. i. 693. D. *Contra Cels.* vi. 80.

It is nationally and collectively that the Jews have hitherto been preserved a distinct people, in their condition of outcasts from their own country, and of strangers and sojourners among the various tribes of mankind: and it seems only a reasonable inference from this fact, that something yet awaits them, in the same national and collective capacity. This cannot be their future conversion to Christianity merely, if the consequence of that conversion is the loss of the same national distinction, the same independent character, as a peculiar people, which they continued to retain, up to the time of the event itself. If the Jews, by becoming converts to Christianity, are to cease to be a nation, and to be merged from that time forward in the great mass of mankind, it would not be easy to conjecture why they should have so long retained a distinctive nationality at all. Was it necessary on any account, to keep then *one* nation, in their unconverted state; and must it not be equally necessary, for the same or similar reasons, to keep them *one* nation, in their converted state? Shall we say, that they have been kept distinct as a nation, in their present state of alienation from God, that they might endure as a nation, the penalty of the guilt, which they contracted as a nation, by rejecting the Messiah first, and his religion afterwards? And shall we not allow, that when the time of their alienation from God as a nation is at an end, they must be restored to his favour as a nation, and be taken back by him again, in the same capacity of his people, in which they were also cast off? The rejection and punishment of the Jews, even as a nation, might be the necessary consequence of the guilt, contracted by

that generation in particular ; but that the Jews, as a nation, though rejected, were still to be considered the people of God—and though punished, were still to be preserved from destruction, was due to the fathers, the elect, whose descendants even that generation were. The gifts and promises of God, as made originally to Abraham, and to his posterity, at that time unborn, were without repentance ; and if they could not be fulfilled to the generation of his children, who were contemporaries of our Saviour and his apostles, because of their impenitence and unbelief, they must still be fulfilled to some generation among the posterity even of that race ; or they will never be fulfilled to the descendants of Abraham at all.

The future conversion of the Jews, then, to Christianity, may be one of the objects designed by their continued preservation as a distinct people, but it is not the only, nor, perhaps, the primary one. Their restoration to their own country, and the resumption of their original position among the integral divisions of mankind, may more justly be considered the final end immediately contemplated by their extraordinary subsistence in a state of being, which for so many centuries has threatened them daily and hourly, with the loss of every peculiar, distinctive characteristic ; and humanly speaking, seemed to make it morally certain that they must at last be blended, in indiscriminable confusion, with the various masses of mankind, among whom they were living. Their preservation, as a nation, therefore, may be a good presumptive argument of their future conversion to Christianity, and as some commentators on scripture have imagined, of their con-

version all at once as a nation ; but it is also an argument of their future restoration to their country ; whether before their conversion, or after it, so far as the fact of their previous preservation is concerned, would be unimportant to the inference : and therefore, need not be now determined.

Now this restoration of the Jews to their country is intimately connected with the doctrine of the millennium ; that is, the former will not take place first, if the latter is not to do so afterwards : and *vice versa*, if there is to be no millenary reign of Christ, with his saints, in Judæa, neither will there be any restoration of the Jews, to their country. The continued subsistence of the Jews, then, for eighteen centuries, down to our own times, a fact, confirmed by the evidence of every man's senses, may be urged by the advocates of the millenary doctrine, as a sensible presumptive proof of the truth of their expectations.

The Jews had long been restored to their country, in the time of Philo Judæus ; and though multitudes of them might be living among the different Gentile communities of the ancient world, it was from choice, and not because their returning to Judæa, and settling in it again, was out of their power, if they wished it. Still less were they in a state of captivity, or in want of a temporal deliverance, as such, in the time of Philo. Yet, at the conclusion of his two treatises, “*De Præmiis et Pœnis*,” (Of Rewards and Punishments,) and “*De Execrationibus*,” (Of the Curses of the Law,) after labouring in his usual manner, to give effect both to the blessings and curses of the law, as recorded in various parts of the Pentateuch, more especially in Lev. xxvi.

and Deuteron. xxviii. he sums up his exposition with a remarkable passage, which it is difficult not to understand literally: and yet, if literally understood, it proves that he thought there would sometime be need of a deliverance and restoration of his nation, far greater and more universal, than ever yet had taken place; and reason sometime to expect it.

“ If, however, they receive the judgments not
“ so much to their destruction as their admonition,
“ and impressed with reverence be changed with all
“ their heart—having reproached themselves for
“ their error, and having openly declared and con-
“ fessed all things soever that they did amiss, when
“ left to themselves—they shall obtain of the sa-
“ viour and merciful God, the good-will that may be
“ expected. . . . For even though they be in the utter-
“ most parts of the earth, in a state of servitude,
“ among the enemies who lead them away captive—
“ they shall all in one day, as if on one signal, be
“ made free And when they have obtained this
“ unexpected freedom, they, who a little before were
“ scattered in Greece and Barbary, among islands
“ and among continents, shall rise up with one im-
“ pulse, and from every quarter bend their steps to-
“ wards one, their appointed, country; being con-
“ ducted by a certain appearance too godlike for
“ human nature, unseen by others, and visible to
“ those alone, who are in the act of being redeemed:
“ about to have three intercessors, for effecting their
“ reconciliation to the Father; one, the indulgence
“ and kindness of Him, that is interceded with, who
“ ever prefers pardon to punishment: a second, the
“ holiness of the founders of the nation a

“ third, the very thing for which more especially,
 “ even the good-will of the abovementioned *advo-*
 “ *cates* prevents and forestalls them; that is, the
 “ change of those for the better, who are going in
 “ search of peace and agreement; and have hardly
 “ been able to find their way out of a state of be-
 “ wilderment, the end whereof is nothing else but to
 “ please God, as children *do* a father. And when
 “ they are arrived, the *cities*, which a little before
 “ lay in ruins, shall be peopled again, and the desert
 “ country shall be inhabited, and the land, which
 “ had been made barren, shall be changed to ferti-
 “ lity. And the prosperity of fathers and ancestors
 “ shall be deemed comparatively trifling, because of
 “ the abundant possession of the means of enjoy-
 “ ment, which flowing from the favour of God, as
 “ from perennial springs, shall provide both each in
 “ particular, and all in common, with wealth with-
 “ out end, too great for envy^k.”

If we compare together 1 Thess. v. 1, 2 : 2 Thess.
 ii. 5, 15 : iii. 6 : 2 Pet. i. 16 : besides other pas-
 sages, which have been particularly considered else-
 where, it will appear a reasonable inference that the
 apostles delivered many things to their converts,
 by word of mouth, which the Spirit of God did not
 think it fit they should record in their writings. It
 will appear probable also, that the subject matter
 of these oral communications, were more especially
 such topics as the second coming of Christ, the end
 of the world, and the like.

It is a natural question, then, whether all vestiges
 of the disclosures, so made, would be totally lost,

^k II. 435. 29. sqq. De Execration.

because they were not committed to writing ; or some memorial of them possibly be transmitted to posterity? It is not probable that they would altogether be lost, as soon as made ; and not be known nor remembered at least for a time, among the contemporaries of the apostles, and their immediate successors. But where, it may be asked, are we to turn, to find such traces of them now, if any were ever perpetuated beyond the lifetime of the apostles? Doubtless, in the *παραδόσεις* or traditions, of the *πρεσβύτεροι* or elders, which the most ancient Christian writers, like Papias and Irenæus, speak of as still rife and flourishing in the church, in their days ; and some of which they actually quote.

Now it would imply as little wisdom and discretion, as modesty and humility, in Christian commentators of the present day, to undervalue and despise these rays of light, which were once scattered over the surface of a dark and mysterious subject, the meaning and accomplishment of the unfulfilled prophecies of scripture ; as of no possible use to the discovery of the sense of such prophecies ; as not worth the pains of being collected or concentrated, by any interpreter of prophecy in our times.

One consequence at least of the greater degree of light on this obscure subject, which, however obtained, the elders of the church in those times seem to have possessed, was this ; that they had fixed and intelligible principles of interpretation, from which they never deviated, and by which they were enabled to construct systems of explanation much more consistent with themselves, and as it appears to me, more simple and natural, than any of the intricate, perplexed, and discordant schemes, which

have supplanted theirs, in modern times. The agreement of the fathers in their opinions upon some very interesting points of futurity, about which the utmost diversity of sentiment prevails among modern divines, is truly remarkable; and as they do not copy their opinions one from another, with servile submission to mere authority, it would not be easy to account for the unanimity of so many minds in ancient times, on speculative points of faith, which serve only to distract the understandings of men at present, except by supposing that the opinions, in which they agreed, were known to be handed down traditionally, from some authentic, infallible source. This will account for their universal reception, implicitly, even among those, who differed widely in other respects: but nothing else will. Every Christian of primitive times would defer alike to the authority of an apostle, or of an apostolical man; and readily believe and assent to assurances, understood to be derived from such a source. Immemorial usage—a prescription traced up to the times of the apostles—but no written injunction found in their writings—establishes the authority of a variety of rites or ceremonies, which have always been observed by the church; as the baptism of infants; the observance of the Christian sabbath; the daily use of the Lord's Prayer, &c. The same kind of tradition might sanction, and give currency to a variety of opinions, relating to the course and particulars of future events—which were once universal among Christians.

It will be worth our while to specify some instances of this agreement, in relation to a point of time, which nearly concerns the proper subject of our inquiries at present, the truth or falsehood

of the doctrine of the millennium; viz. the end of the world, with the nature and course of the events, which may be expected to precede it.

The fathers, then, are unanimous in entertaining the belief that, before the end of the world, and the consummation of all things, Elias, or Elijah, must appear in person, to perform a certain part assigned to him in the counsels of the Divine providence.

But it may be said, that this expectation might be originally founded on the same assurance of our Saviour's, Matt. xvii. 10, 11; Mark ix. 11, 12: from which we ourselves, in the first part of this chapter, have shewn, that it was by just inference to be collected. The fact of such an expectation, then, however generally entertained by the fathers, is no proof that they received it traditionally from the apostles.

But neither is it any proof to the contrary; unless it be assumed, that the teaching of the apostles afterwards, never might repeat or confirm in this particular instance, the teaching of their Master before them. It happens, however, that with the general expectation of a reappearance of Elijah before the end of the world, the fathers connect a particular belief that he is one of the two witnesses, spoken of, Rev. xi. 3, sqq.: and that is a belief, which they could not have collected from the words of our Lord in either of the above passages, but must have had from some other source; most probably, tradition.

They are also unanimous in believing the other of the same two witnesses, to be some real person, as much as Elijah; they differ only in supposing what real person is meant. By far the greatest part of them agree in considering him to be the patriarch Enoch, who was translated to heaven under the

antediluvian dispensation, without seeing death, as Elijah was under the postdiluvian¹.

Another article of belief, in which the fathers are unanimous, is this; that before the end of the world,

¹ See Justin M. Dialog. 236. 5—30—Tertullian, iv. 291. De Anima, 35: 316. *ibid.* 50: iii. 253. De Resurr. Carnis, 22: 333. *ibid.* 58—Hippolytus Opera, 20. De Antichristo, xliii: 22. *ibid.* xlvi. xlvii: 31. *ibid.* lxiv. (Cf. 25. *ibid.* 1: which implies that Hippolytus expected an appearance of St. John in person, in the time of Antichrist, besides that of Enoch and Elias: as did the author De Consummatione Mundi, ascribed to Hippolytus. See Opera, pars ii. 14, 15, 19; capp. xxi. xxii. xxix. Cf. also Hieronym. iii. 1114. *ad med.* in Dan. ix.)—Incertus auctor de Montibus Sina et Sion, apud Cyprian. Opera, 36: De Pascha Computus, *ibid.* 68—Origen, iv. 92. C: Comm. in Joh. tom. ii. 30: *ibid.* 115. E. tom. vi. 7: which cites a tradition of the Jews, that Phineas, son of Eleazar, was Elias—Lactantius, 912. De extremo Jud. Fragn.: 846. De Mortibus Persecutor. 2—Hilarius Pictav. Ep. 564. C. D. in Matt. Canon xx: where the two witnesses are supposed to be Moses and Elias; though the common opinion is mentioned, that they were to be Enoch and Elias, or Jeremiah and Elias—Apollinarius Laodicenus, ap. Hieron. iii. 1115 *ad pr.* in Dan. ix—Ammonius in Dan. ix. 27. apud SS. Deperditos I. pars ii. 213—Chrysostom, iii. 823. B—C. De Prophetarum Obscuritate, Hom. ii: Comm. in Nov. Test. i. 623. A: Homilia lvii—Hieronym. iv. pars i. 43. *ad calcem*, in Matt. xi: 79. *ad prin.* in Matt. xvii: 165. *ad calc.*—166. *ad med.* Epistola ad Marcellam—Sulpicius Severus, De Vita B. Martini, 25—Chron. Paschale, 21. B. 435. iv. Doctrotheus, de xii. Apostolis—Augustin, ii. 712. E. F. Ep. exciii. 5: vi. 294. E. F. App. De Antichristo: vii. 613. A—C. 615. E. De Civitate Dei, xx. 29, 30—Theodoret, i. 1364. in Ps. 105: ii. 1048. in Ezech. xlvi: 1294. 95. in Dan. xii: iv. 457. Hæreticar. Fabb. Compendium, v. 23—Ephraïmus Antiochenus, apud Phot. Bibl. Cod. 229. p. 252. 17: 253. 35. 254. 1—Theophylact, i. 54. C. in Matt. xi: 90. C. D. in Matt. xvii: 216. D. E. in Marc. ix: 273. C. in Lucam, 1: 772. D. in Joh. xxi: ii. 523. B. in 1 ad Thess. v.

Antichrist must be expected to appear. It made no difference whether they were advocates or opponents of the doctrine of the millennium in particular : in the reception of this opinion, there was a perfect agreement among all parties. The only distinction was, that the advocates of the millennium expected *their* kingdom to begin and proceed after the appearance and destruction of Antichrist ; the opponents of the doctrine expected the same of the *kingdom in heaven*.

The fathers are likewise agreed in considering Antichrist himself to be a real person ; and no merely figurative or symbolical character. Whatever he may be, and whatever the part which he is destined to act, it was the unanimous persuasion of the elders of the church, that he will be a literal character, and his part will be the part of a literal bodily agent.

The name of Antichrist is doubtless familiar to all Christians. I question, however, whether many among us, are aware of the proper signification of the word itself, or if they are, have duly attended to it. Yet common as the mention of the name of Antichrist may be among Christians at present, and familiar, no doubt, as it was in the mouths and thoughts of Christians of former times, the word nowhere occurs in the Old or New Testament, under such circumstances as to imply that it occurs for the first time, as a new name expressive of a new idea ; as the denomination of something, that never before was heard of. We meet with it in two only of the books of scripture, the First or General Epistle of St. John, and the Second ; thrice in the former, and once in the latter. But its use, on each of the subsequent

occasions, is to be referred to its occurrence in the first instance of all; and there we have it introduced, (though for the first time in the Old or New Testament,) as a name, with which the readers of the Epistle were already familiar: “And as ye
“ have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now
“ are there many Antichrists^m.” It is referred to, as something which *they* knew of—but something which they knew of, because they had *heard*, not because they had *read* of it. Therefore their acquaintance with the name of Antichrist, familiar as it was to them previously, had been derived first from *oral tradition*: the expectation of a coming of Antichrist was raised first by *oral teaching*.

Whether this First Epistle General of St. John was written before the Revelation, is a question upon which we have no need to enter; though it might perhaps be decided in the negative, with more probability than in the affirmative. The name of Antichrist appears not in the book of Revelation; yet the elders of the church are unanimous in giving that name to the symbolical character of the beast, which does appear there. Neither is the name of Antichrist found in the book of Daniel; where it might perhaps have appeared, on the same principle, that its correlative term, Messiah, or Christ, *the Anointed*, does appear there: and yet the fathers are not less unanimous in recognising the person of Antichrist, under both the symbolical representation of the little horn, and the name of the king of the north; whom some modern interpreters of the prophecies of Daniel, denominate the *wilful king*.

In order to fix the proper meaning of the word, I

^m 1 John ii. 18.

have collected in the note below, a variety of parallel instances, where the same Greek preposition which enters into the composition of the term, *Antichristus*, is compounded with other substantivesⁿ.

ⁿ As the denomination of *ὁ Χριστός*, *the Christ*, or *the Messiah*, in its proper and primary intention, was no proper name, like *Jesus* (*Ἰησοῦς*); but to all intents and purposes a name of office; it is so far analogous to any other name of office—whether of a civil or a spiritual kind, would be indifferent; as *ἕπατος*, *στρατηγός*, *ταμίης*, and the like. *Ἀντίχριστος*, then, is just as much the correlative, and at the same time the opposite, of *Χριστός*, as *ἀνθύπατος*, *ἀντιστρατήγος*, *ἀντιταμίης*, are of *ἕπατος*, *στρατηγός*, and *ταμίης*, respectively. And no classical reader requires to be told, that these are the names by which Greek writers express the Latin, *proconsule*, *proprætores*, *proquæstore*. On the same principle, *Ἀντίχριστος* in Greek would be equivalent to *Pro-Christo*, in Latin.

Analogous to the meaning of *ἀντί*, when thus compounded with terms of office, is its signification in composition with substantives of any kind generally.

Thus, *ἀντίδουλος*. Instead of a slave; *qui loco servi est*.

ἵππων τ' ὄνων τ' ὀχεῖα, καὶ ταύρων γονὰς
δοῦς ἀντίδουλα, καὶ πόνων ἐκδέκτορα.

Æsch. Prom. Solutus.

κἀγὼ μὲν ἀντίδουλος· ἐκ δὲ χρημάτων
φεύγων Ὀρέστης ἐστίν. Æschyl. Choephoroi, 132.

ἀντίπαις. As good as a child; *qui loco pueri, vel puellæ est*.
δείσασα γὰρ γραῦς, οὐδὲν, ἀντίπαις μὲν οὖν.

Æschyl. Eumenides, 38.

ἄστις θυγατρὸς ἀντίπαιδος ἐκ λόγων.

Eurip. Andromache, 326.

ἀντίπυργος. Instead of a tower; *quod loco turris est*.

ἀντίπυργον ἐπιβάσαι πέτραν. Eurip. Bacch. 1050.

ἀντίκεντρον. Instead of a goad; *quod loco stimuli est*.

τοῖς σάφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίνεται.

Æschyl. Eumenides, 132.

ἀντίμισθος. In lieu of hire or pay; *quod loco mercedis est*.

μνήμην ποτ' ἀντίμισθον εὔρετ' ἐν λιταῖς.

Æschyl. Supplices, 285.

The result of these examples is to shew that the word Antichrist, signifies neither more nor less

ἀντίστοιχος, qui ex opposito est. It is well known that this is the denomination given to any one member of a particular order or arrangement of things, whether good or evil, which answered to, or stood over against, its coordinate in the opposite order or arrangement of evils or goods. Both together, these orders or arrangements were called *συστοιχίαι*, and both the series of coordinates, *σύστοιχα*: but no particular member of either series was *ἀντίστοιχον* to another, except that which, in the opposite series, stood immediately over against it. Euripides applies the word, to *shadow*: as the exact counterpart in outline of body.

σκιὰ γὰρ ἀντίστοιχος ὡς φωνὴν ἔχεις. Andromache, 736.

ἀντίπετρος. Answering to stone; *quod loco saxi est.*

αὐτοῦ· μηκέτι τοῦδ' ἀντιπέτρου

βήματος ἔξω πόδα κλίνης.

Soph. Œd. ad Col. 192.

where the gloss of the Scholiast is, *τοῦ ἰσοπέτρου χαλκοῦ, ἀντίπετρας γὰρ χαλκοῦς ἦν*: that is, the seat in question was of brass instead of stone.

Not to multiply particular quotations, we meet with *ἀντίστροφος*, (answering to something as exactly as antistrophe to strophe,) Arist. Rhet. i. i. 1—*ἀντίχειρ* (another hand; equivalent to an hand; the thumb) Macrob. Saturn. vii. 13—*ἀντικνήμιον* (the foreleg, the tibia, as answering to the back part of the leg, the *κνήμη*, or calf)—*ἀντισύγκλητος* (answering to a senate—another or rival senate) Plut. Sylla, 8—*ἀντίχθων* (the Pythagorean name for the visible circle of the heavens, as answering in shape and appearance to the earth; as the counterpart of the earth) Clem. Alex. ii. 732. 37: Strom. v. 14—*ἀντικλείδα* (a counterfeit key: a false key, answering to a true) *ibid.* 897. 38: Strom. vii. 16—*ἀντωνυμία*, instead of a noun, or a substantive; a pronoun.

Even the name of *Antipodes* was given originally to the inhabitants of the other hemisphere, to express the circumstance of peculiarity in their position, by which their feet are turned over against ours; their feet, and not their heads, answer to our feet.

Upon the death of Cato, Cicero composed an encomium or panegyric on his memory, which he published under the title of *Cato*: Julius Cæsar replied to it, by a work of a contrary de-

than, *another Christ*; a *pro-Christ*; a *vice-Christ*; an *alter Christus*; a pretender to the name of

scription, which he called *Anticato*. At first sight, the meaning of this term may appear to be, *κατὰ Κάρωνος*—against Cato. It denotes, however, in reality, not *against Cato*, or *in Catonem*; but *ἀντὶ τοῦ Κάρωνος*—not *Cato* the person, but *Cato* the panegyric of Cicero: a reply to *the Cato*; a retort to *the Cato*.

In like manner, Lactantius, *Divin. Institt.* 168. ii. 9. applies to the Devil the name of *Antitheus*: not, however, as denoting the adversary of God, but the *locum tenens* of God; as the usurper of the name and place of God, whose worship, falsely reputed to be God's, had supplanted that of the true God.

Augustin, indeed, iii. 844. F. in *Epist. Johan.* ii. *Tractat.* iii. 4: has the following passage: “ Et interrogare debet unusquisque
“ conscientiam suam, an sit Antichristus. Latine enim An-
“ tichristus, contrarius est Christo. Non quomodo nonnulli in-
“ telligunt Antichristum ideo dictum, quod ante Christum ven-
“ turus sit, id est, post eum venturus sit Christus: non sic
“ dicitur, nec sic scribitur; sed Antichristus, id est contrarius
“ Christo.” Hence we may infer, that he considered the meaning of the term to be, *an enemy or adversary of Christ*. But Augustin, by his own confession, was an indifferent Greek scholar: and every one, who is acquainted with the original language, knows that the preposition *ἀντὶ* in Greek, is not synonymous with *κατὰ*, *adverse to*, or *against*, nor can ever be used promiscuously with it. It is clear too, that he takes as the basis of his definition of Antichrist, the declaration of I John, ii. 22: “ He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and
“ the Son.” But this is no definition of Antichrist as such; only *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*, and from a general resemblance between the proper character and conduct of any one, who denied the Son, or refused to pay due reverence to the Son, and those of one, who should falsely pretend to, and usurp, the name and honour of the Son himself. No doubt the Antichrist must be the enemy, adversary, or opponent of the Christ; nay, even his capital and most formidable enemy. But why? because he is not only his rival, but his counterfeit: he robs him, or endeavours to rob him, not only of his honour, but of the very essence of his character: in fact he does not rob him

Christ, who, in every circumstance or characteristic of personal distinction, that can contribute to determine the individuality of the real Christ, appears to be, and sets himself up, as the counterpart of the true.

None of the fathers has either entered more fully into the precise meaning of the term, or at least laboured to express it in a greater variety of ways, than Hippolytus Portuensis, bishop and martyr; from whose genuine tract “*De Antichristo*,” we may cite the following passage °.

of the former, but by robbing him of the latter. He steals his form and appearance first; and then lays claim to his rights and privileges. He assumes his mask or *person*; and so passes himself off for his reality; and as the real Christ claims all that can belong to him, in that capacity. Cf. Origen, i. 692. D. *Contra Cels.* vi. 79.

Tertullian, de *Præscriptionibus Hæreticorum*, 4: *Opera*, ii. 5: observes accordingly, *Qui Antichristi interim et semper, nisi Christi rebelles? A Christus rebellis*, a rebel Christ, in the nature of things, must be a false or spurious Christ, as opposed to a true; for in that sense only can the former, as Christ, be said to rebel against the latter, as Christ.

However, in the *Acta of Pionius*, 147. 14: there is a much better definition of Antichrist. “*Dixit autem Apostolus: si Satanus in angelum lucis transformatur; nihil magnum, si ministri ejus transfigurentur. unde et Antichristus quasi Christus.*”

And where St. John, even when he recognises the Antichrist as still to come, speaks of many Antichrists as in the world already, this means no more than that the followers of a certain leader or partisan; all who prepare the way for a certain agent; all who in any way resemble another, promote his success, or the like, are so far identified with him, and may be called by his name itself.

° *Opera*, 7. cap. vi: cf. 23, 24. cap. xlix. Cf. also, the work, *De Consummatione Mundi*, ascribed to Hippolytus; which

“ As then the Lord God Jesus Christ, for the
 “ royal and glorious principle of his nature was be-
 “ forehand preached of as a lion; in the same man-
 “ ner have the scriptures beforehand spoken of the
 “ Antichrist likewise as a lion, for his tyrannical and
 “ violent nature. For the deceiver wishes to liken
 “ himself as to all things, to the Son of God. The
 “ Christ is a lion, and the Antichrist is a lion; the
 “ Christ is a king, and the Antichrist is a king: the
 “ Saviour was manifested as a lamb, and he shall
 “ likewise appear as a lamb, being within a wolf.
 “ In circumcision came the Saviour into the world,
 “ and so shall he likewise come. The Lord sent
 “ apostles unto all nations, and he shall likewise
 “ send false apostles. The Saviour brought together
 “ the sheep that were scattered, and he shall likewise
 “ bring together the people that was scattered. The
 “ Lord gave a seal to them who believe on him, and
 “ so shall he likewise give. In the form of a man
 “ did the Saviour appear, and in the form of a man
 “ shall he come. The Lord raised his holy flesh
 “ again, and shewed it as a temple, and he shall
 “ raise up the temple of stone in Jerusalem.”

There cannot be a plainer description of a Pro-
 Christ, or *alter Christus*, a personation of the true,
 by a false character, assuming his name and attri-
 butes, than the above passage supplies; and pre-
 cise and definite as it is, I will venture to say, that
 if we do not suppose such a mock character to
 be meant by the person, to whom the elders of the
 church unanimously apply the name of Antichrist,

whether genuine throughout or not, certainly contains many
 passages, *verbatim* the same as others, in the genuine work,
 “ De Antichristo.” See Opera, pars ii. 13, 14. capp. xix. xx.

we do not enter either into the true spirit of the designation, or into their construction of it, who use it.

Let us now proceed to inquire what sort of real personage it is, to whom the fathers are agreed in considering this description to be applicable; that is, whether they look upon him as a mere man, or as something more. The upshot of such an inquiry will be to satisfy us, that they did not expect, in the person of Antichrist, a mere man; they all of them regarded him as a being of a nature superior to the human, though manifested in the form of a man; and many of them go so far, as to avow their belief that he would be an incarnation of the Prince of the powers of darkness himself.

Justin Martyr applies to Antichrist both St. Paul's description of the man of sin, (*ὁ τῆς ἀποστασίας ἄνθρωπος*)—and Daniel's of the little horn, and the wilful king, “he who speaks bold things even against the Most High,” (*ὁ καὶ εἰς τὸν ὑψιστον ἕξαλλα λαλῶν*^p): which recognises him indeed, as a man, but as a man who makes himself equal to God, and usurps the honour due to the Most High alone.

The Epistle of Barnabas spoke of the “season of iniquity,” and “of the iniquitous one,” (*καιρὸς τῆς ἀνομίας*, and *τοῦ ἀνόμου*^q): and of the days' being at hand when all things should perish along with *τῷ πονηρῷ*: which may best be understood of the *evil one* himself. This must include the destruction of Antichrist, either as the evil one, or as the *ἀνομος*—the iniquitous one, or man of sin, in question—one of his prime agents and principal coadjutors.

At the outset of that ancient and authentic docu-

^p Dialog. 371. 20, 21.

^q Capp. 16. 18.

ment, the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, giving an account of their persecution under Verus and M. Aurelius, it is said; "For with all
 " his might did the adversary fall upon the church,
 " making a prelude already of that appearance and
 " presence of his, which is sometime to take place
 " without fear;" (παντὶ γὰρ σθένει ἐνέσκηψεν ὁ ἀντικείμενος, προοιμιαζόμενος ἤδη τὴν ἀδεῶς μέλλουσαν ἔσεσθαι παρουσίαν αὐτοῦ^r;) which speaks of the same adversary as instigating that persecution, whose appearance and agency were still to take place on a much larger scale, and much more boldly; that is, as Antichrist, and as the author of *his* persecution of the church.

A part of Celsus' work against Christianity, is quoted by Origen^s; wherein, after ridiculing the folly of the Christians, in feigning the existence of an adversary of God, a Devil, whom they named, after the Hebrew tongue, Satan—as if God could have any adversary, capable of opposing or frustrating his will—he proceeds: "The Son of God, then,
 " is worsted by the Devil; and being corrected by
 " him, he teaches us also to make light of our cor-
 " rections by him, declaring beforehand that Satan,
 " it seems, will himself also appear in like manner,
 " and exhibit mighty and wonderful works, appropriating as his own the glory of God. These
 " works we must not mind, if we wish to have
 " nothing to do with him; but must believe in him-
 " self only."

The antiquity of Celsus, which was probably as great as the reign of Hadrian, and his acquaintance with the popular opinions and expectations of the Christians of his own time, render his testimony

^r Eus. E. H. 155. A. v. 1.

^s I. 663. C. D. lib. vi. 42.

truly valuable. That the above is a description of Antichrist there can be no question; and he is indicated only not by name, where it is said, that Christ had spoken of him also as to appear *in like manner* (ὡς ἄρα ὁ Σατανᾶς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁμοίως φανεῖς) viz.—to what he himself had done; and to work miracles and wonders, as he had wrought. Celsus then had learned from his acquaintance with the Christian doctrines, thus much; that Christ himself had taught his followers to expect the appearance of an Antichrist, who should be Satan; and had warned them beforehand against being deceived by him. Origen accordingly understood Celsus to be speaking of Antichrist, as such; whom he also calls a child of the Devil, or Satan, though not Satan in person; and applies to the fact of his future appearance, St. Paul's prediction, 2 Thess. ii. 2—6. and Daniel's, viii. 23—25^t; as he does again in another instance, where also we have a further extract from Celsus produced^u; in which he refers as before, to the expectation that a notable magician, called Satan, predicted by Christ, was sometime to appear; and though in contradistinction to deceivers and impostors ordinarily, was still to work miracles and prodigies; and therefore, as we may presume, of a much more remarkable kind than usual.

In the *Constitutiones Apostolicæ*^x, (The Apostolical Constitutions,) Antichrist is called “the deceiver
“ of the world, the enemy of the truth, the champion
“ of that which is false,” (ὁ κοσμοπλάνος, ὁ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐχθρὸς, ὁ τοῦ ψευδοῦς προστάτης :) whom the Lord Jesus

^t I. 667, 668. lib. cit. 45, 46.

^u Opera, i. 423. F. 424. A. Contra Cels. ii. 50.

^x 313. E. vii. 32.

should destroy with the spirit of his mouth, (as it is said, 2 Thess. ii. 8): and directly after^y, this deceiver of the world is called the Devil: whence it appears that the author of the *Constitutiones Apostolicæ* took Antichrist to be the Devil.

In the *Clementina Homilia Secunda*^z, (the second of the *Clementine Homilies*,) a false prophet, or impostor, it is said, will precede Antichrist; and then, towards the time of the end, Antichrist himself will first appear, before the return of the true Christ: and here, it is observable, *Ἀντίχριστος* (instead of Christ) is distinctly opposed to *ὁ ὄντως Χριστός*, (he who is truly Christ.)

Irenæus, writing against Marcus, a leader of the sect of the *Colorbasei*, quotes a passage in iambics from one of the elders, directed against him, which is to this effect: “ Marcus, thou maker of idols, and
 “ interpreter of prodigies, well versed in astrological
 “ and magical art, whereby thou strengthenest the
 “ doctrines of error, shewing signs to those who are
 “ led astray by thee, undertakings of power be-
 “ fitting apostasy, which thy father, Satan, furnishes
 “ thee the means of effecting by Azazel’s angelical
 “ power, having in thee a precursor of the subtlety
 “ which will take the place of God.” *Adv. Hær. i. 12. 76. 3.*

We may infer therefore, that in the opinion of this elder, as well as of Irenæus, the author of the great apostasy, Antichrist himself, would be Satan or Azazel. In fact, Irenæus speaks of Marcus, as almost the actual precursor of Antichrist, “ præ-
 “ cursor quasi vere existens Antichristi^a.” Azazel

^y 314. A.

^z 563. D. cap. 17.

^a *Loc. cit. cap. viii. 56. 9. 10.*

is the name of one of the apostate angels in the Book of Enoch, as appears both from Grabe's *Spicilegium*^b, and from Dr. Laurence's translation of the *Liber Enoch* itself^c.

In that part of his work, which treats expressly of Antichrist^d, Irenæus speaks of him "as taking upon him all the power of the Devil—summing up in himself the apostasy of the Devil—summing up in himself all the delusion of the Devil—as sitting in the temple at Jerusalem—as endeavouring to shew himself off as Christ;" that is, in a word, as Antichrist; as, "of his own purpose summing up on himself the apostasy—leading astray such as worship him, as if he himself were Christ—of his own will and his own mind performing whatever he shall perform; as working signs and wonders, with demons and apostate spirits ministering to him—summing up at once the whole of his apostasy, which has taken place for six thousand years;" that is, from the beginning of the creation to the end of the world: and the like—especially cap. 29, throughout: language, I think, which plainly implies that the author of it considered Antichrist to be the appearance of the Devil in person, acting in a human form the part assigned to Antichrist in scripture.

Tertullian, after demanding, in the language of St. Paul, who is that man of sin, replies, "According to us, indeed, he is Antichrist, as the old and the new prophecies teach . . . but according to Marcion, I think, he will turn out to be the Christ of the Creator;" that is, the Christ of Marcion's $\Delta\gamma$ -

^b 348. 351. ^c Ch. x. 6. cf. lxxxvii. 3. ^d V. 25. 437. sqq.

μουργός, or Demiurge, who, according to him, had not yet come. “He is not yet come according to his principles,” (that is, Marcion’s,) continues Tertullian; “but whether of the two is he?” that is, is he the Christ or the Antichrist? which recognises the proper meaning and opposition of these two terms. Then, after arguing further, that Marcion’s Christ, who according to him was not yet come, if he actually ever appeared, must be the Antichrist of the common faith, he continues: “But he agrees with us concerning Antichrist also;” that is, he too, viz. Marcion, agrees with the common faith in expecting the Antichrist: “If so, let me ask him,” says Tertullian, “what sort of a thing it is, that Satan, an angel of the Demiurge, should be necessary to him, and should be killed by him, being to serve a part for the benefit of the Demiurge, by the operation of a scheme of deceiving?” Whence it follows, that both Marcion and Tertullian agreed in expecting Antichrist to be Satan, an angel of the Demiurge, according to Marcion, as well as to the rest of the church, in whose opinion the Creator God was the only true and the supreme God; and in his capacity of Antichrist, as referred to Marcion’s supreme God, to be slain by him. As Tertullian argues, this doctrine might well be objected to Marcion, to prove his inconsistency with himself, who supposed the Demiurge or Creator Deus, and the supreme God, his antagonist, to be the senders of the same person, the one as the Christ, the other as the Antichrist, each for a purpose of his own; while the rest of the church, acknowledging no Christ as yet to come, though they

expected an Antichrist, could not but look upon him as to come in one capacity, and as to have only one proper part to discharge^d.

By Hippolytus, Antichrist is called “a son of the Devil, and a vessel of Satan^e :” but he is not said to be the Devil himself. Yet he also affirmed, as we saw before, that he would appear in the form of a man.

The author, *De Consummatione Mundi*, on the other hand, says, that as our Saviour assumed flesh of a pure virgin, “so shall the Devil go forth on the earth from an abominable woman :” but he adds, that it should be in a phantasm or appearance only : “But this substance of his flesh, methinks, my beloved, he will assume, as an organ, in appearance ; wherefore also he is born of a virgin, as if spirit, and he will at that time appear to the rest, as if flesh^f.”

That Cyprian believed Antichrist to be an appearance of the Devil, in person, may not obscurely be collected from his fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth Epistles^g.

In the Disputation of Archelaus and Manes, (held about A. D. 276,) Archelaus says of Manes^h : “Thou art a vessel of Antichrist, and no good vessel neither, but a mean and unworthy one, which he, like some barbarian or tyrant, when attempting to rush in upon those who are living under the rule of just laws, has sent before, as one doomed to die, in order to be certified how great, and of what sort

^d I. 445—447. *Contra Marcion*. v. 16.

^e *De Antichristo*, 57. p. 27.

^f Cap. 22. p. 15. Cf. 40. p. 24.

^g *Opera*, 120—140.

^h *Rel. Sacræ*, iv. 223. cap. 36.

“ is the virtue of the lawful king and his people :
 “ for he has feared to rush in himself unexpectedly,
 “ nor yet has he ventured to send any of his neces-
 “ sary agents besides, (or *of the nearest akin to*
 “ *himself*;) lest he should come to some mischief.
 “ Such an one has Antichrist thy king sent thee
 “ before him, as one doomed to die, unto us the
 “ subjects of a good and holy king. Nor am I
 “ uttering these assertions without due proof of
 “ their truth ; but from the fact that I see thee do
 “ no miracle, I thus think of thee. For as to him,
 “ we are already aware that he is to be transformed
 “ even into an angel of light, and that his ministers
 “ are to come in the like capacity, and to do signs
 “ and wonders, so as that, if it be possible, even the
 “ elect should be led astray. Who then art thou,
 “ who hast been allotted by Satan thy father, not
 “ even a place of importance in his service ?”

This is clearly to recognise Antichrist as the same with Satan.

The author of the “ Recognitions of Clemens,”
 (Recognitiones Clementisⁱ;) after enumerating *De-*
cem Paria, or couples of things, opposed to one
 another, as a good of a certain kind to the evil ex-
 exactly of the contrary kind, and destined to this world
 from the beginning of time, reckons the *tenth* and
last to be the *par*, or match, of Antichrist and
 Christ (*Antichristi et Christi*.) Though this divi-
 sion of pairs professes to be taken from the ten
 plagues of Egypt, yet there is a manifest allusion
 in it to the ten categories, *σύστοιχα*, or coordinates of
 the Pythagoreans ; according to which, all goods,
 comprehended under their *genus summum*, or most

ⁱ PP. Apost. 450. A. lib. iii. 61. Cf. capp. 55. 59.

widely discriminated essential character, were ranked over against their opposite evils. It is a clear intimation then, not only of the time when the author of this work expected Antichrist to appear, but of what he thought him to be in comparison of the Christ; viz. his exact counterpart or double.

Lactantius speaks of Antichrist as “a king, begotten by an evil spirit;” as “a prophet of lies;” as having power given him, “to do signs and wonders;” as the same who is called by the church Antichrist, “but will himself falsely give out that he is Christ^k.” He gives a similar description of him in his Epitome.

Cyrill of Jerusalem represents the Antichrist as a person urged and empowered by the adversary, but not as the Devil himself: “When the true Christ “is about to come a second time, the adversary, “taking advantage of the expectation of the simple “... actuates a certain man, being a magician, and “most expert in the art of deceiving to vile purposes, which consists in witchcrafts and charms^l.”

St. Martin, according to his biographer, Sulpicius Severus, was of opinion that the Antichrist had been “conceived or begotten by an evil spirit,” and was already in his nonage or boyhood, at the time of his own death^m.

Jerome speaks of Antichrist in the phraseology of St. Paul, as “the man of sin, in whom is the well-spring of all sins;” as “the son of perdition, that “is, of the Devil;” as “the author of the perdition “of all persons, who oppose Christ,” and therefore called Antichrist; “whose works are works of

^k 652. sqq. *Divin. Inst.* vii. 17. 19.

^l 210. 37. *Cateches.* xv. 4.

^m *Dialog.* ii. 16. Cf. *Vita Martini*, 25.

“Satan;” as uniting in himself “all powers, and signs, and wonders; but all of them lying ones:” and the likeⁿ.

Augustin, in his Tractate of Antichrist, (*De Antichristo*,) thus expresses himself^o: “But let us now see what is to be the beginning of Antichrist. . . . Now he will be born in the usual way, like other men, and not as some say, of a virgin alone . . . But at the very moment when he begins to be conceived, the Devil will enter at the same time into his mother’s womb, and of the power of the Devil will his substance be quickened, compacted, and fostered in his mother’s womb, and the power of the Devil will ever be with him. . . . Thus shall the Devil descend on the mother of Antichrist, and fill her totally, surround her totally, hold her totally, and possess her totally, within and without: that she may conceive by the cooperation of the Devil through a man, and the thing that shall be born, be altogether sinful, altogether damned.”

Theodoret expresses himself on the same subject as follows^p: “For the Devil will imitate the incarnation of our God and Saviour; and as the Lord was manifested by the instrumentality of man’s nature, and wrought our salvation, so shall the Devil also take a meet instrument of his own wickedness, and by means thereof shew forth his own operation, deceiving such men as are indolent and off their guard, with false signs and wonders, and a parade of marvels in appearance.” And again^q: “It is necessary however to observe over

ⁿ Opera, iv. pars i. 209, 210. Epist. ad Algasiam.

^o VI. Appendix, 243. B. C. P II. 1207. in Dan. vii. 26.

^q IV. 454. Hæret. Fabb. Compend. v. 23. De Antichristo.

“ and above what has been said, that before the
“ manifestation of the Lord, the evil genius of man-
“ kind, the God-rivalling demon, the robber of the
“ style and title of God, will come, having disguised
“ himself under the human nature ; and as formerly
“ he stole the name of God, and bestowed it on him-
“ self, and on his associates in the work of his
“ wickedness, and persuaded men to offer to himself
“ the worship which is due to God, through the in-
“ strumentality of images wrought with hands, so
“ shall he appropriate to himself the appellation of
“ the Lord Christ, and as one may say, shall tho-
“ roughly deceive all men.”

In another passage too^r, the Devil is still spoken of as personally distinct from Antichrist, though “ wholly himself knit together with him;” and though exhibiting by him and through him, all the various arts and contrivances of his own subtlety and wickedness.

Theophylact likewise says of Antichrist^s: “ Now
“ this same Antichrist is a man, who carries Satan
“ about with him.”

An opinion was long current in the Roman empire, even after the death of Nero, that he was not dead, but somewhere or other still alive. The continued existence of this belief in his time is attested by Dio Chrysostom, though he was writing either at the latter end of the reign of Domitian, or in the reign of Nerva and Trajan^t: and various impostors, or Pseudo-Nerones, took advantage of the persuasion, to appear and personate the character of Nero, from

^r Loc. cit. p. 459.

^s III. 423. B. in 1 Joh. iv. 3. Cf. II. 536—538.

^t I. 504, 505. Oratio xxi.

so early as the year after his death, U. C. 822. A. D. 69. to so late as the reign of Domitian, U. C. 841. A. D. 88^u: the last of whom, too, met with considerable support and countenance from the Parthians.

Whether founded originally in a similar persuasion about this emperor, among Christians, or not, an expectation was early conceived, and long current in the church, that the Antichrist would appear in the person of Nero: of whom it must be confessed, that both by his other enormities, exceeding the measure of mere human depravity, and by his setting the example of persecuting Christianity, in particular, by means of the whole civil, or secular power armed and combined against it, not in Rome merely, but throughout the dominions of the Roman empire, he might justly be considered a very apt prototype. For the evidence of the fact of this opinion, as entertained in the church, we may refer to Lactantius^x; Jerome^y; Augustin^z. Sulpicius Severus mentions it as a notion of his saint, Martin, that Nero and Antichrist would appear together, and the former be killed by the latter^a: but in his *Sacra Historia*, or *Sacred History*, he recognises only the common opinion^b.

The Apocryphal production, entitled, “*Ascensio Isaiaë vatis*,” The ascension of Isaiah the prophet, which Dr. Laurence translated from the Ethiopic,

^u Tac. Hist. i. 2: ii. 8. Suet. Neron. 57, 5. Cf. Xiphilinum et Zonaram.

^x 845, 846: De Mortibus Persecutor. 2.

^y Hieron. iii. 1129. *ad med*: in Dan. xi.

^z VII. 597. E. F. De Civitate Dei, xx: xix. 3

^a Dialog. ii. 16.

^b II. 42.

and published, appears to me very plainly to have been the composition of some Christian ; and consequently to be later than the Christian era. Of the date of this work, and of the probable character of its author, something will be found in the Appendix. I mention it at present only to observe, that the existence of the same opinion concerning Nero, is recognised by that work also, in the following passage^c. Having mentioned the age of those, whom the latter days should call, (the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, as such,) it proceeds ; “ And after its completion, Berial shall descend, the mighty angel, the prince of this world, which he has possessed from its creation. He shall descend from the firmament in the form of a man, an impious monarch, the murderer of his mother, in the form of him, the sovereign of this world :” (or rather, as it is translated in the Latin, *regis hujus mundi*, “ a king or sovereign of this world.”)

This murderer of his mother, whose likeness Berial was to assume, is as plainly Nero, as Berial himself is Satan ; and his appearance in the form of Nero is his appearance as Antichrist.

I have not cited the above passages from the fathers of the first four or five centuries, to illustrate their opinions of the personal individuality of Antichrist, in the shape of an incarnation of the spirit of evil, because I concur in the same belief ; but merely to shew, that in supposing Antichrist to be a real, and not a merely symbolical character, whatever else they thought of him, they were unanimous. In expecting him to be a personation of the spirit of evil in

^c Ch. iv. 2.

the form of a man, they do not all agree; but in believing, that though individually distinct from him, he should yet be most closely united with him, animated, actuated, empowered, and assisted by him, and so far almost identified with him; even those who did not expect him to be Satan in a human shape, would be in unison with those that did. This last view of the personal relation of Antichrist to Satan, is more in accordance with the description given of him in the book of Revelation: where a personal distinction of subjects is evidently drawn, both as to the previous appearance and agency, and as to the ultimate treatment and disposal, of the Dragon or Satan; the Beast or Antichrist; and the false prophet, his minister, herald, or apostle. All three, indeed, are supposed to be consigned, at one and the same time, (*viz.* at the period of the first resurrection,) to the bottomless pit: but the two last of them, as it would seem, for ever; the first, only for a limited time, the thousand years of the millennium; after which he is supposed to be again liberated, for a particular purpose, and for a short time longer. The proper punishment of the Beast or Antichrist, then, as such, begins and proceeds without intermission from the time of the first resurrection; but that of the dragon or Satan, not until after the second.

The language of St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 7, in the words *τὸ μυστήριον . . . τῆς ἀνομίας*, “The mystery . . . of iniquity,” bears a remarkable analogy to that, at 1 Tim. iii. 16. in the words, *τὸ μυστήριον τῆς εὐσεβείας*, “The mystery of godliness.” The sequel of this passage immediately shews that the mystery of godliness, alluded to, was in an especial manner, the

manifestation of God *in the flesh*: the incarnation of the supreme Deity. May we then, infer, on the principle of analogy or opposition, that the mystery of iniquity is something the reverse of that, and yet its counterpart; the manifestation of the enemy of God in the flesh also; the incarnation of the principle of evil? and that too, without implying the absorption of this principle, by the form assumed in the person of a man, so as no longer to retain its individuality in the person of Satan; any more than the absorption of the divinity, by its assumption of the human nature in the person of Christ? I confess, this appears to me no improbable conjecture; and I propose it to the consideration of the reader as, perhaps, as plausible an explanation of the “mystery of iniquity,” as any that has yet been offered.

This mystery, indeed, is very differently interpreted by many of the fathers: yet so, that of whatever they expounded it, they concluded the agency of a person to be meant by the mystery in question. Some of them interpret it to be Nero, the reigning emperor at the time when the second of Thessalonians was thought to have been written^d. The fallacy of this opinion is shewn by the simple fact, that the reigning emperor, at the time when both the Epistles to the Thessalonians were written, was actually not Nero, but Claudius: an emperor, not without great faults, it is true, but still no such monster of wickedness as Nero; and in particular, no persecutor of Christianity, as he was.

^d Chrys. v. 235. D: 806. B: in Nov. Test. Comm. tom. vi. 383. E—384. A. in 2 ad Th. Hom. iv—Hieron. iv. pars i. 209. *ad calc.* Epistola ad Algasiam—Augustin, vii. 597. E. De Civitate Dei, xx. xix. 3.

Theodoret, while he mentions this opinion, proposes another much more reasonable, and probable: viz. that the mystery of iniquity, which was already working, when St. Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, meant the rise and growth of heresies. For if Satan himself is the archdeceiver of all, “a liar, and the father of one^e;” all liars, deceivers, and seducers; all perverters of the truth, are of him, and through him. Hence, if heresiarchs and heretics come under this description, they are organs of Satan; and Satan might be said, even then, to be working *by* them, as if working *in* them, were there any such in existence even then: as no doubt there were many; the followers of Simon Magus, and the Judaising teachers in particular^f.

Another opinion, on which great unanimity is seen to prevail among the fathers, is this; that, before the appearance of Antichrist the Roman empire was to be dissolved, and broken up into ten different parts; yet at his appearance, was to be reunited, and restored to its pristine integrity under him. And as the coming of Antichrist could not take place, without that dissolution, nor that dissolution, without the breaking up of the existing political state of things; very many of the ancient interpreters of prophecy understood St. Paul's, τὸ κατέχον, “that which letteth *or* hindereth,” 2 Thess. ii. 6. of the Roman empire in particular; as presenting, while it lasted, an effectual, insuperable bar to the appearance of Antichrist. And in the spirit of this construction, the Christians, we are told, prayed daily and fervently, for the stability and preservation of that empire: whose convulsion and dismem-

^e John viii. 44.

^f Theodoret, iii. 534. in 2 ad Thess. ii. 7.

berment were to bring with them so dreadful and disastrous an event, as the rise of the power of Antichrist. Hence Tertullian^g: “There is also another and a more urgent reason, why we should pray for the emperors, even for all the estate of the empire, and interests of Rome. For we know that a violence of the greatest kind, which hangs over the whole world, and the end of the world itself, the arrival of which threatens calamities, horrible to think of, are kept back by the intervention of the Roman empire. We do not wish, then, to make trial *of such things*, and while we pray that they may be deferred, we favour the continued duration of the Roman empire.” And Lactantius^h: “Even the fact itself plainly assures us that things ere long will totter and fall; only that while the city of Rome is safe and sound, there seems reason to apprehend nothing of that kind For that is the state which as yet props up all things, and we are bound to pray to the God of heaven, and to beg of him, provided only the decrees and ordinances of his good pleasure can be deferred, that that abominable tyrant may not come sooner than we think of, to attempt so execrable a deed, and to dig from its socket that eye, on whose extinction the world itself will begin to fall.”

Neither do I cite this opinion, because I concur in it; for it appears to me much more probable, from St. Paul’s use of the phrase, *ὁ κατέχων*, “He, who letteth,” in the next verse, (2 Thess. ii. 7.) that the let or obstacle in question to the appearance of An-

^g V. 82. Apologeticus ad Gentes, 32. ^h 671, 672. Divin. Institt. vii. 25.

tichrist, is some *person*, as such, and no *thing*, like the Roman empire in the abstract: and I concur in the sentiment, expressed by Theodoret, that he means the Divine power, acting by the usual providence with which he controls both the natural and the supernatural dispensations of human affairs, and not suffering the agency of Satan, or of any inferior cause, to anticipate the time preordained in his own counsels, for the manifestation of Antichrist, as well as for every other sublunary event. I cite such passages only to shew, that upon this particular subject also the interpreters of old had a just and correct perception of the course of futurity, as it has been declared and ascertained by the event. Yet what could be more unlikely, or inconceivable, in those times, than the dissolution and dismemberment of the empire in questionⁱ?

Other circumstances there are in the future history of Antichrist, traditionally reported, and well calculated to shew how exactly he was thought to be the counterpart of the Christ; of which, however, I will further mention only this one, because an allusion has occurred to it before: viz. that the precise spot of his destruction will be that very

ⁱ Cf. Irenæus, v. 26. 440: 30. 449—Hippolytus, De Antichristo, 49. p. 24: 50. p. 25: De Consummatione Mundi, 15. p. 11—Lactantius, 647. sqq.: Divin. Institt. vii. 15, 16—Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, 210, 211: Catechesis xv. 4—Chrysost. Comm. in Nov. Test. tom. vi. 383. D: in 2 ad Thess. Hom. iv—Hieronym. iv. pars i. 209. Ep. ad Algasia; where it is observed, that the name of blasphemy on the forehead of the scarlet whore, was *Roma æterna*—Augustin, vii. 597. De Civitate Dei, xx. xix. 2, 3—Theodoret, ii. 533, 534. in 2 ad Thess. ii. 6: iv. 458, 459. Hæreticar. Fabular. Compend. v. 23. De Antichristo.

mount Olivet, from which our Lord ascended into heaven^k.

The subject of the millennium is too closely connected with that of Antichrist, to make this review of the opinions of the primitive interpreters of prophecy, in relation to the latter, a digression irrelevant to the prosecution of an inquiry, which relates professedly to the former. There is no more reason to believe that the disclosures of prophecy are literally to be fulfilled, in reference to one of these topics, than in respect to the other: and the two subjects are so interwoven and blended in the prophetic revelation of the future, that it is impracticable to detach them asunder. The attributes of Antichrist himself, defined and particularized in scripture, are such as apply to no symbolical or abstract personage; nor yet to any real historical character, who has hitherto appeared. I think it in vain to search for the traces of a just and legitimate correspondence to them, either in the Mahomedan or the papistical power, as such; or in the personal history of Mahomet, or of any of the popes of Rome. But if Antichrist is strictly a character who has yet to appear, then the opinions of the fathers concerning him, have as good a chance of turning out to be true, as any that can be proposed in opposition to theirs.

The determination of the great Antichristian contest, which, on this principle, is yet to come, in the opinion of the millennarians is the epoch of the millenary reign. The one will begin, as they expect, when the other is over; but not before. The literal construction of the prophecies which relate to the

^k Hieron. iii. 215. *ad med.* in Isaïæ xxvi: 1134. *ad prin.* in Dan. xi.

first of these events, is therefore, of paramount importance to the right apprehension of those, which concern the second: and even among modern expositors of prophecy, few may be disposed to admit that the Revelation is to be understood literally, in the part which treats of Antichrist, and yet to deny that it must be similarly interpreted, with reference to the first resurrection, and the consequent millenary reign. And if it has appeared from the above review, that the elders of the church, in the most remote times, received and have perpetuated a sound and just conception of the character and personal history of Antichrist—this renders it probable that they received and have transmitted an equally correct anticipation of the future, in their testimony to the millennium.

While I contend, however, for the consistency of the doctrine in question with the language of scripture; and while I maintain the fact of its general reception in the church, at a very early period of its history; I am far from denying that there were, at all times, dissentients from it; originally indeed the least numerous party; but in progress of time, who became the majority. I have not investigated the testimony of ecclesiastical antiquity to the doctrine, below the age of Jerome, Augustin, or Theodoret: for there was no necessity to do so; nor merely with a view to shew how far back its origin goes, to bring it down even to their time. The main thing necessary to prove the orthodoxy of the expectation in question, is to be able to demonstrate, upon unexceptionable evidence, that it was entertained and professed among Christians, as a common article of

belief, at a period contemporary with the rise of Christianity itself. If the expectation fell into oblivion afterwards; if it was any wise modified or perverted, inconsistent with its original truth and simplicity; if influence and authority, argument or irony, wit or sophistry, conspired, in the course of time, to prejudice men's minds against it, and to dispossess it of its hold on the church; it only shared the fate of many other articles of Christian doctrine, faith, or practice; derived from as unquestionable an authority, and once as current, as itself.

If there is reason, then, to believe that the confident expectation of a millennium was always the most ancient, and once the orthodox or catholic persuasion of the church, we need not hesitate to admit, that from the fourth or fifth century downwards, the state of the case was reversed; that the antimillennarians became the preponderant and orthodox party; the millennarians the least numerous, and, as it was supposed, the heterodox. With some few instances of individual ecclesiastical writers who dissented from the received persuasion, this state of opinions continued until the reformation; when the doctrine of a millennium was again brought into discussion, though by some of its advocates revived in a shape, which was very likely to render it generally odious, if not to lead to its banishment from the church.

To pass over the names of all those belonging to the protestant communion, either in our own country or elsewhere, who from that time to the present, have declared themselves for or against the belief in question, and not to notice also the particular modifications of opinion relating to it, which may have prevailed even among its advocates; after an interval

of comparative silence for the last three hundred years, it has again begun to attract the notice of serious and reflecting Christians; among whom too, we may perceive a disposition to think and reason about it in the spirit of candour and impartiality; agreeing to try the doctrine by its own merits, whether it is truly founded in scripture, and actually in unison with sound and legitimate principles of interpreting the prophecies on record, or not.

I think, therefore, I cannot better sum up this historical review of the evidence in favour of the doctrine, than if I specify a few of the causes, which appear to me the most likely to have brought about a gradual change of public opinion, on the subject of the millennium; though the fact of its original reception in the church, and even of its derivation from the apostles, be nevertheless admitted.

In the first place then, a doctrine which rested mainly upon the foundation of oral teaching, as this of the millennium appears to have done; would naturally be liable to die away, in process of time, and become obsolete. It might be rife and lively, strong and undoubting, among the first race of Christians and their immediate successors, when so many were living, to remember what the apostles, or the disciples of the apostles had taught about it; but the echo of such teachings, as transmitted by them to posterity, could not fail to get more and more indistinct, and at last to become evanescent; like the undulations of a sound, which grow fainter and fainter, the further they are propagated from the focus of vibration; and at length die away into silence.

Such persons as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and a multitude of their contemporaries, were firm

believers in the millennium, because the *viva vox* of John the presbyter, of Aristio, of Polycarp; nay even of the apostles themselves; from which they had so often heard it, was still as audible in their ears, as their bodily form and lineaments were visible to their eyes. Whatever might be the intrinsic nature of the matter of fact; and how great soever, its antecedent improbability; they would be very well satisfied on the testimony of their senses, that they had heard it predicted by them; and they would be equally confident in the consciousness of their own convictions, that they had heard and understood what they predicted, aright. They would be sure, too, that what they had heard plainly and simply delivered by their teachers, was plainly and simply to be received. They could not want the means of distinguishing when the apostles, or any other competent instructor, were speaking in figures and parables; and when they were not. The nature of oral, or *viva voce* teaching, with respect to such distinctions as these, cannot be mistaken, as that of written or epistolary may. The very look and gesture, the tone and utterance of the speaker, are so many criterions to his hearers whether he is conversing in his ordinary, or in an extraordinary manner; whether he wishes to be plain, or to be obscure; whether he expects what he is saying, to be understood *ad litteram*, or not. Not to urge, that what the actual hearers of actual instructors, at the time, did not, or could not, understand, they would naturally ask to be explained: especially if the obvious, *prima facie* sense of the doctrine, was something marvellous and improbable, if understood literally; which nevertheless, for aught they knew,

if figuratively construed and explained, might be liable to no such objection. Is it possible, I say, that an actual hearer of St. John, or of any apostolical man, could listen from his mouth, to one of those *strange parables*, as Eusebius called them, relating to the millennium; and if he thought there was reason to consider it a parable, not ask of his teacher, to be informed what it meant? But, indeed, the very idea that the apostles would teach their own converts any thing, in figure or parable, for the purpose of not being understood by them, is absurd. Our Saviour had not done so by the apostles themselves; but whatever he might have communicated to the people in parables only, he was ever ready to explain simply and intelligibly to them: why then should the apostles do otherwise by their disciples?

All these reasons, then, would the contemporaries of the apostles, or of apostolical men, have, for placing implicit reliance on the truth of a future fact, as extraordinary even as the millennium; were they only conscious that they had heard their teachers predict it in their own presence, and to their own ears. No such considerations, however, would apply to the case of Dionysius, Jerome, Theodoret, or any opponent of the doctrine after the second century downwards. Upon their minds, the antecedent improbability of the doctrine itself might produce its full effect, uncounteracted by their memories and consciousness, that strange as it seemed to be, they had heard it inculcated by an infallible authority; and remarkable as the language in which it had been inculcated, they very well knew it was meant for plain matter of fact; and must be re-

ceived without qualification, exactly as it had been delivered.

Again, the apparent agreement between the expectation of a temporal kingdom of Jesus Christ, at his second advent, as professed by the Christian advocates of the millennium, and the expectation entertained by the Jews of the same kind of kingdom, at his first appearance, would naturally seem to imply that the millennarian Christians laboured under the same hallucination with respect to the one, as the Jews had done, with respect to the other: and, no doubt, it was for this reason, as well as for others, hereafter to be mentioned, that the opponents of the doctrine stigmatized its friends with the name of *Judaizers*; that is, of those who thought with the Jews.

But be this as it may; to accuse even the Jews of being in error, in expecting a temporal reign of their Messiah at all, would be to beg the point at issue between the millennarians and their adversaries; which is this very thing; whether such a kingdom of the Messiah, as a temporal, is ever to have an existence, or not. If it is, that kingdom will be the millenary: if it is not, there will be of course no millennium.

To what extent the prophecies of the Old Testament might have justified the Jews, in expecting some temporal kingdom of their Messiah, and at some proper time, if not at the time when they did expect it, is a question on which we need not now to enter. We have already said enough to shew that they had good grounds for such an expectation in general; and one thing is certain, viz. that as they entertained an expectation of such a kingdom, in general,

at the time when our Saviour appeared, so they are never blamed or reproached for entertaining that expectation in general, either by our Saviour, or by his apostles, as if it were altogether groundless, altogether imaginary, and under no circumstances and at no time, to be realized by the event. If they are reproved, whether directly or indirectly, for their preconceived notions about it, it is for entertaining the expectation of it, *there* and *then*: for confounding *times* and *seasons*, and by a fatal ὕστερον πρότερον, in their mode of reading and interpreting prophecy, inverting the proper course and succession of events.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the Christian reader, that there were two classes of predictions, in the Old Testament, relating to the Messiah and his personal history; each of them as precise and definite, and each as certainly to be fulfilled, as the other; but devoted respectively to particulars of such a kind, that it was impossible the fulfilment of both could be synchronous or simultaneous: one of them must be over, before the other could begin. The first of these embraced all those revelations of the future, which delineated so forcibly and minutely the characteristics of a suffering Messiah; the second, all such as drew the picture, equally luminous and expressive, of a triumphant Messiah; both, consequently, relating to the history of the same person, yet as diametrically repugnant to each other, as suffering, debasement, and humiliation are, to triumph, to glory, and exaltation. There was no mode of reconciling these two classes of predictions with the truth of history, and the identity of their relation to one and the same subject, but that of time

and sequence. Each might be fulfilled, by the history of the same person, in its own order; but not otherwise. The Jews, as a nation, overlooked this distinction between the various prophecies, relating to their Messiah; and by a fatal perversion of judgment, into the causes of which we need not at present inquire, committed the practical absurdity of confounding the order of events; and anticipating, upon the first advent of Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of those particulars, which, if they were to be verified at all in the history of their Messiah, could be so, only upon a second. And because they were not fulfilled *there* and *then*, *when* and *where* they expected that they would be; but instead of that, when all that the event disclosed of the personal history of Jesus Christ, was a series of facts the very reverse of such anticipations; they unanimously rejected him as their Messiah.

Again, the corruption of the doctrine of the millennium by certain early heretics, Cerinthus, and others of the same school, who made it pander to the voluptuous passions of men, by holding out the promise of a carnal or sensual paradise, would speedily bring its belief into discredit with virtuous and sober-minded Christians. There can be no doubt, that this abuse of the doctrine, and the pernicious, demoralizing tendencies of such an abuse, so contrary to the measure of holiness and purity, which Christians are bound to aspire at even in this life, and much more, may expect to see realized in the life to come, disgusted good men, and set them upon the discovery of reasons for rejecting, as unscriptural and untrue, a persuasion so vicious in its consequences, as this seemed to be.

I shall endeavour, indeed, to vindicate the doctrine from the charge of leading to any such results; and by shewing that, when rightly stated, the millenary reign is only the revival and restoration of the state of things originally intended for paradise, before the transgression and fall of the human pair, I shall prove, I hope, to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind, that it can imply nothing offensive to decency; or inconsistent with our most refined conceptions of innocence and purity. The fact, then, of such and such a depravation of the doctrine of a millennium, by unprincipled, evil minded persons, is no argument against its truth or propriety; and if we think fit to reject it upon such grounds, we may for similar reasons cast off our belief in Christianity itself. For the abominable immoralities of which certain sects of heretics in ancient times were known to be guilty, being allowed themselves by those who were nominally at least Christians; were ascribed among the Gentiles to the Christians generally, and considered essential to their religion: an opinion, calculated to bring the name and profession of Christian into hatred and detestation, and to make every virtuous heathen abhor and repudiate a religion, which required of its followers the practice of such enormities, as this was supposed to do.

Yet it must be admitted that the perversion of so peculiar a doctrine, in a carnal sense, was a natural consequence of its open profession and belief. It has ever been the aim and contrivance of deceivers, to make converts to their party, and ensure the popularity of their particular opinions, by holding out lures and temptations to some bad passion or other of

human nature; by promising or permitting something, which God condemns; which reason and virtue disclaim. Cerinthus' millennium and Mahomet's paradise are the counterparts of each other; and both, the reflected image of the naked wickedness and impurity of the human heart.

Nor is it any wonder that carnal-minded men, that heresiarchs or impostors, in early times, should have pictured to themselves and their followers, such prospects of future enjoyment from the pleasures of sense, under the spiritual reign of the King of righteousness; when even the best and most virtuous persons in the present life, cannot form a conception of the joys of heaven, without some dash of the alloy of earth. It is one of the most lamentable effects of man's original fall from purity and holiness, and one of the most certain indications of his present natural corruption, and inclination to evil, that he can scarcely in this life imagine a state of absolute good, without the least mixture of evil. So true it is, that the taste of the same forbidden fruit, which communicated the knowledge of good, gave with it the knowledge of evil: and paradise itself, when presented to our apprehensions through the gross film of sense and experience, which at present obscures our moral perceptions, seems no longer exempt from sin.

Again, the officious zeal of some advocates of the millennium, in straining for more than the necessity of the case required, would have a bad effect with Christians at large, and prejudice them against the truth of the doctrine itself. In their anxiety to establish the fact of a temporal reign of Christ on earth, these injudicious advocates ran into the other

extreme, of denying the fact of any eternal reign of Christ in heaven : whereas both may be as scriptural and true, as they are consistent with each other.

The expectation of a temporal kingdom of Christ upon earth, for a certain length of time, does not exclude the present or future existence of a reign of Christ through all eternity in heaven : on the contrary, it may be shewn, that the interposition of the millenary dispensation is the very thing which connects the end of time with the beginning of eternity ; and conducts gradually from earth to heaven, by a transition which without it would be violent and abrupt, but with it, is easy and regular. It may be shewn, that the enjoyments and happiness of the millenary reign, according to a sober and rational conception of them, are just of that middle character, which was to be expected from a dispensation, serving for the purpose of connecting two such different things, as time and eternity, sense and spirit : the utmost possible perfection and amount of happiness, which can be realized on earth, and in any state of being, which resembles a social existence on earth ; but far, very far, inferior to the kind and degree of beatitude, which may be expected in heaven, and must characterise such a state of things, as is proper only for heaven. The kingdom of Christ, then, at the end of its œconomy upon earth, will not expire, as some millennarians anciently taught ; it will only be translated to heaven : and whereas he governed it before as man, he will thenceforward preside over it as God ; and whereas he administered his kingdom upon earth, as man, and as distinct from the Father, he will administer

his kingdom in heaven, as God, and as one with the Father ; for God will then be *all in all*.

Another very probable cause of the gradual extinction of the doctrine of the millennium, was the introduction of those peculiar principles of scriptural interpretation, before alluded to ; which began in the school of Alexandria, and were thence extensively propagated over the church. From a perpetual reference to things above, ($\tau\acute{\alpha} \acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$), and of a spiritual or intellectual kind, these principles were called the anagogical or spiritualizing ; teaching men to believe, that the letter of scripture was a mere husk or shell, within which the sense contained was of a mystical, recondite nature ; not to be extracted or developed, except by the anagogical process : in one word, that every thing in scripture was figure and parable ; nothing, rightly interpreted, was plain, obvious, and grammatical truth.

No principle of interpretation was better adapted to undermine the reception of a dogma, like that of the millennium ; to dispossess it by degrees of its authority in the church ; and to foil and elude the reasonings of its advocates in its behalf. The doctrine is based and rooted in the text of scripture. Only convince us, that the true sense of the scriptural promises is not to be found in their outward and literal construction, but must be sought for in something out of sight, and far beneath, and we must abandon our cause as desperate. An interpreter of prophecy, who avails himself of the latitude which the anagogical principle allows him, and one who stands on the letter of scripture only, wage the contest with very unequal weapons, and on terms much to the advantage of one of the combatants in par-

ticular. There can be but *one* literal sense of the same passage of scripture: the various meanings which the anagogical principle might extract from one and the same literal text, may be endless. An ingenious imagination can never be at a loss for mystical analogies; and were it driven from one position, might readily take its stand on another: whereas the advocate of the literal sense has to rest upon a single chance; and must either make out his case from the simple and obvious construction of the text, or give up the controversy as hopeless.

This peculiar rule and method of scripture interpretation was once exceedingly popular; nay, even the only orthodox mode of explaining scripture; especially among the Christian writers of the third century. Great names, like those of Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, had set the example of it, and brought it into fashion: there was a charm about the system itself, which tempted men to adopt it, and apply it in their comments on the word of God, both written, and delivered from the pulpit. It afforded unbounded scope to the exercise of invention, the labour of which seemed to be its own reward, in the pleasure communicated by the discovery of new truths, unobserved analogies, and a nearer and nearer view of the unexplored and unfathomable depths of the riches of the sense of scripture, which were thus continually brought to light. It is no wonder that those, who took along with them this principle of interpretation, as the only legitimate key to the understanding of the scriptures, were not millennarians.

It was a further reason why the doctrine in question should gradually sink into oblivion, that high

authorities, as Dionysius of Alexandria, and Origen, were found inculcating by their writings a persuasion, concerning the book of Revelation, which could not fail in the end to lead to such an effect; viz. that it was a *sealed* book; which no wisdom of man could understand, no ingenuity of human wit could penetrate: which was full of absurdity and contradictions, if literally construed and explained; and therefore to be rendered consistent and reasonable, must be explained and construed, in some way not literal; though in what, they did not pretend to say.

This was to render due honour, indeed, to the book, as of divine original, but effectually to deter men from the study of it; and still more, to stop beforehand the mouth of all arguments founded upon its literal sense and meaning. With such a prejudice on their minds as this, respecting the deep, mystical signification of the text of Revelation, men would no more listen to reasonings derived from its literal construction, or allow any one to have penetrated into its meaning, who was conversant only with its text, than they would have attended to one, who professed to explain the utterings of the spirit in an unknown tongue, without the gift of interpretation: or to translate and bring down to the level of human comprehension, the unspeakable words, which St. Paul had heard in paradise. Now, it is upon the testimony of the book of Revelation, that the millennarian, mainly, though not exclusively, grounds his faith in this article of his belief. I say mainly, though not exclusively: for we owe to the book of Revelation our assurance, if not of the fact in general, yet of one of its most important circum-

stances. We might have had reason, for instance, to expect a kingdom of Christ upon earth, without that book; but we should not have certainly known, without it, that it would be for a thousand years. And so, of other particulars relating to it.

Lastly, another influential reason, which would operate strongly to the discredit of the doctrine of the millennium, especially after the fifth century, was the unhesitating reception both by its advocates and by its opponents, of the erroneous measurement of time, founded on the Septuagint, in preference to the Hebrew. Professing to expect the millennium, at the end of A. M. 6000, and being mistaken in their computation of the age of the world, by nearly 1500 years in excess, the millennarians would soon have the mortification of seeing their favourite theory disproved by the event. So confident was Lactantius of the approach of the end, reckoned by this false chronology, that he predicted the fulfilment of all that he himself, or his party expected, within 200 years from his own time^c. The fallacy of that prediction was speedily matter of historical notoriety: and we should be little conversant with the ordinary workings of human reasoning, did we hesitate to suppose, that the practical confutation of expectations so confidently put forth, and so soon and so effectually proved to be nugatory and vain,

^a Sulpicius Severus, in like manner, compromises the credit of his favourite saint, Martin, by making him declare that Antichrist must be already born, and even in his boyhood, not long before his own death; and therefore that the end of the world was shortly to be expected. "Quod autem hæc ab illo audivimus," says the speaker in the dialogue, "annus octavus est. Vos autem æstimate, quo in præcipitio consistunt, quæ futura sunt." Dialog. ii. 16.

would operate reflexively with the world at large, as demonstrative proof of the falsehood of all such expectations. Had Lactantius himself lived to see the disappointment of his own prediction, I question not but that he must either have recast his scheme of chronology entirely, (which very few in those days would have thought of doing,) or have become a convert to the opinions of the anti-millennarians; and allowed that he was before in error.

To these reasons, perhaps more might be added; all calculated to strengthen the influence of causes, unfavourable to the continuance and existence of the doctrine. But these appear to me abundantly sufficient to account for its gradually falling into decay, and even its temporary extinction in the church, as a capital article of religious faith and trust, notwithstanding its reception among Christians generally, at a period of remote antiquity, and bordering on the lifetime of the apostles themselves.

CHAPTER XII. PART III.

On the Millennium. Objections to the doctrine; and uses to which the interposition of the Millenary Economy is subservient.

THE statement of the nature and final end of the millenary dispensation, rightly considered, supplies an answer to all the objections *a priori* which have been, or may be, urged to the event. If these objections, whether of an abstruse and philosophical, or of an obvious and popular character, are yet derived, as must ultimately be the case, from the state of things around us; they cannot be urged against the doctrine of the millennium, except so far as the supposed state of things under that dispensation, corresponds and is parallel to the state of things in existence at present. But no objections, derived from the actual system of things, as at present constituted, can apply to a state of nature, and a condition of the moral and physical world, so widely distinct from the present, as that which the advocates of the millennium expect, under their millenary dispensation.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the state of nature at present; and the most difficult to reconcile to the acknowledged derivation of all things from the same allwise and beneficent, as well as almighty Creator, is its mixed and heterogeneous constitution; the coexistence and coagency of antagonist principles, in one and the same scheme of being; the diffusion of evil of various kinds, and of different degrees of activity, as widely as that of

good, equally multiform and powerful; of evil too, not less designed and contemplated in its original production, and therefore, to all appearance, not less agreeable to the nature and attributes, or at least to the *will* of a common Creator, than its opposite good; the presence of confusion in the midst of order; symptoms of defect and imperfection, combined with the pregnant proofs of absolute skill and consummate wisdom. No metaphysical reasonings *a priori* would prepare us to have expected, in the works of the same Creator, effects so dissimilar, and so repugnant to each other as these; and no metaphysical reasonings *a posteriori*, without the assistance of revelation, can enable us to reconcile the actual phenomena of nature, with the truth of their common original; or to account for the existence of so much discordancy in the kinds and tendencies of the effects produced, on the implicit assumption of the same first cause of all, and in a manner no longer at variance with the harmony which ought to subsist between the nature and properties of an allwise, all-good, and almighty Creator, and those of the creatures of his power, his wisdom, his goodness.

The present natural state of things, then, without the light of scripture to explain the reasons of its constitution, abounds in difficulties, which the philosophers of antiquity, who had not the benefit of that light, found to be absolutely insuperable; and which the most speculative minds of subsequent times, with the full benefit of revealed light, have scarcely been able to resolve to their own satisfaction. None of these difficulties, though practically felt by philosophical minds, however humble and pious, to be such stumblingblocks at present, we may

undertake to pronounce beforehand—can apply to the constitution of the world under the millennium ; if that turns out to be what the wisest and most judicious anticipation of the event, would lead us to expect. The causes which produce those difficulties now, will have no being then ; the phenomena, both moral and physical, which are so distressing and so perplexing at present, will be removed and disappear then. The essential characteristics of such a dispensation as the millenary, in the nature of things must be the reverse of the present—no conflict of opposite principles—no combination of discordant ends and purposes—no doubling of things any more—no mixture of evil with good—no alloying of perfection with imperfection—but amidst all the variety of the same natural effects *in genere*, the predominance of one simple and uniform quality *in specie*—the possession of the utmost perfection, of which each is capable. Under the millennium, while every thing in nature remains generally the same as before, every thing may become in particular as good as new ; and while each species of a common genus, and each individual of a common species, retain their proper distinctive characteristics, all may so evidently be cast in the same divine mould, and all so strikingly impressed with the same divine image, that each shall be a just and harmonious transcript of its Creator, and in each, his infinite, adorable, perfections shall be visible and intelligible alike.

When therefore, the reader is told that the millenary œconomy is neither more nor less, than the realization, for a certain length of time, of the same scheme of things, which actually subsisted once be-

fore, for the interval between the time of the creation and that of the fall; and which the beneficent Author of nature, no doubt, originally intended to exist as long as the world, which he had just formed: he is provided with an answer to all the objections and arguments of its opponents. No difficulty can lie in the way of that œconomy, which would not hold good of the state of things appointed for paradise, before the fall; and consequently of the state of things virtually intended for the world ever after, had the fall never taken place.

It is certainly possible for the same Almighty power, who ordained and appointed the scheme of paradise at first, as the state and constitution of being designed for his creatures, to revive and reestablish that scheme, either now or at any future period, (if he thinks fit so to do,) on the face of the same earth, where he intended it at first to have taken effect. But with respect to the probability or improbability of his thinking proper to do so: perhaps it would be presumptuous in any the most intellectual of his creatures, to indulge in conjectures what *he* was *likely* to do, or not to do: it would be rather our duty to turn to the records of his good pleasure, and to satisfy ourselves from thence, whether he has declared what he will do, or what he will not do: in a word, to search the scriptures—would we know if there is reason to expect the revival of the scheme of paradise, at any future period, or not. Now this is a question of fact, to which it was my object to return an affirmative answer, in the first part of the present discourse, by producing such testimonies of the word of God, as do seem to justify the expectation of a millennium.

Were it proper, however, to speculate, *a priori*, on what was to be expected from the divine counsels, and what was not; good reasons might perhaps be assigned, to render it antecedently probable that the original intention of the Creator, though interrupted and suspended by the fall, should nevertheless be sometime realized on the earth, before all things came to an end; and that too, among the creatures whom he formed at first to exist thereon.

But, indeed, in speculating upon the *a priori* probability or improbability of such a future event as the millennium, our reason, if left to itself, has no data on which to form its judgment; and to talk of it, either as probable or as improbable, to merely human apprehensions, is absurd. Men's notions of probable or improbable, when applied to future events, are founded on the assumed resemblance of the future to the past; and that assumption supposes, that let the future be as distant as it may, all things will still continue as they are; and nothing hereafter will come to pass, which has not happened before; that is, which is not generally the same as the past.

The doctrine of the millennium proceeds on an hypothesis the very reverse of this; that all things will not continue as they are; and let the present state of things go on as long as it may, there will yet be, before the whole comes to an end, a mighty and wonderful change: and though the matter or substance of nature may continue the same, its attributes, properties, accidents and appearances, will be totally altered and transformed. What criteria then of likely or unlikely, of natural or preternatural, nay, even of possible or impossible, to judge of the probable futurity of an event like this, can be sup-

plied either by the experience of the present, or the history of the past? Under such circumstances as these, we have no alternative left, except to believe, or disbelieve, upon the *ipse dixit* of a competent authority; to surrender up our judgments to our faith; and be content to expect with confidence what God has promised, but to wait with patience his own time for the fulfilment; when the mode and nature of the operation will become sensible along with their effect. Or, if we will allow no future event to be either probable or improbable, which does not, in some way or other, resemble the past, we must renounce our faith in the kingdom of heaven itself, or cling still to a conviction that heaven, after all, will be merely the counterpart of earth; and the joys of a blessed and spiritual immortality will be only a modification of the pleasures of time and sense, proportionably improved and enhanced.

Of the objections to the doctrine of a millennium, some have been anticipated, and answered already. And with regard to those that still remain, as the doctrine itself was perhaps better understood, and more correctly professed, or at least, was more generally debated, in ancient times, than in modern, and divided the church more extensively then, than it has done since; we are naturally induced to look for the arguments against it, in the writers of those periods more particularly. The objections, therefore, which I propose to consider, are such as I have gleaned from the works of the most popular, and as it was thought, the most successful of its adversaries, during that portion of the history of the church, for which we investigated its existence, and during which it still retained more or less of its primitive ascendancy.

In the time of Augustin, that is, by the beginning of the fifth century, we have seen that the name of chiliast, or millenarian, had come to be fastened on the advocates of the doctrine, as a nickname or term of reproach; and under this name, the doctrine and its abettors are frequently lashed and ridiculed by their opponents; especially by Jerome and Theodoret ^a.

It is observable of both these authorities, that they speak of the doctrine as a Jewish fable; and call its advocates, Judaizers. Jerome in particular, on one occasion, stigmatizes such Christians as Ebionites; though as it appears from the passage, not in a literal but a metaphorical sense: “The Jews, and “the heirs of Jewish error, the Ebionites, who, in “accordance to the lowness of their apprehension of “*things*, have taken the name of poor^b.” The proper meaning of the word Ebion in Hebrew, being *poor* or *mean*, it is here applied to those who entertained grovelling and unworthy notions (as Jerome thought) of the kingdom of Christ; that is, the millenarians.

From the charge of Judaizing, I endeavoured to vindicate the advocates of the millennium, in the last Part, if it means no more than that the Christians, who advocated such a doctrine, entertained

^a Hieron. iii. 105. *ad med.*: 132. *ad med.*: 146. *ad med.*: 214. *ad prin.*: 215. *ad med.*: 262. *ad prin.*: 355. *ad calc.*: 391. *ad prin.*: 396. *ad prin.*: 438. *ad calc.*: 488. *ad med.*: 683. *ad calc.*: 686. *ad med.*: *ad calc.*: 808. *ad med.*: 963. *ad med.*: 980. *ad med.*: 1109. *ad med.*: 1274. *ad med.*: 1364. *ad calc.*—iv. pars i. 90. *ad prin.*: 171. *ad calc.*

Theodoret. i. 1041. in Ps. lxiv: 1364. in Ps. cv—ii. 1018. in Ezech. xxxix: 1045. 1048. 1051. in Ezech. xlvi: 1590. in Aggæ. ii—iv. 449. Hæreticar. Fabb. Compendium, v. 21.

^b III. 511. *ad prin.*: in Isai. lxvi.

the same general expectation of a temporal kingdom, as the Jews had done before. But Jerome's language frequently insinuates, that there was so close an agreement between the Jews and these Christians in all the articles of their peculiar belief, relating to this subject, as to imply that even *they* adopted such opinions from the Jews. In this case, it might very well be asked of Jerome, or of any other contemporary writer, who brands them with the name of Judaizers, how it happened that Trypho the Jew had never heard of the doctrine of the millennium, or any of the articles of faith connected with it, until he learned them from Justin Martyr in the course of their dialogue together? Can it be supposed, that the resurrection of the patriarchs, the restoration of the tribes, and the personal reign of the Messiah in the midst of departed saints, raised again to life and glory, was a traditionary doctrine of the rabbis, from the earliest times, and yet that Trypho, himself most probably a rabbi, and otherwise well skilled in their traditions, knew nothing about it? Did either the Sadducees, who put the question to our Saviour relating to the resurrection; or the Pharisees who heard it put, and answered, believe in any such doctrine, or know of any such doctrine, at the time? If not, it is a natural inference, that if the Jews in Jerome's time, agreed with the Christian advocates of the millennium, in their peculiar opinions, the former had borrowed them from the latter, and not *vice versa*: and therefore, that the former might be said to Christianize, in believing such things, more justly than the latter to Judaize. Between Justin Martyr and Jerome, there was an interval of three hundred years: during

which the doctrines of the rabbis might undergo great changes; and no doubt did. Up to Justin's time, they existed only in the shape of oral or floating traditions, and perhaps had neither body, nor system, properly so called; afterwards, and between his time and Jerome's, they were collected and incorporated in the Mishna. Nor is it at all unlikely that much, originally and simply Christian, might get into that repository, in a Jewish shape, and modified in a manner peculiar to the rabbinical doctrines. Neither was the Gemara, or complement of the Mishna, which with that makes up the Talmud—compiled so soon as the time of Jerome, or at least not before it.

There is a passage, however, even in his writings, wherein he speaks of the doctrine with more candour and reserve; as what he would not venture absolutely to condemn, considering how many saints and martyrs had entertained the belief of it; and, as he might have added, had sealed their faith in it with their blood. “Though we do not assent to these things, yet we cannot undertake to condemn them, because many ecclesiastical writers and martyrs have said them. Let every one be free to think as he feels inclined, and let all things be reserved for the judgment of the Lord ^c.”

Let us consider, in the next place, what testimony he renders in another passage, to the prevalence of the opinion, to the numbers of its advocates, even in his own time; and to the great names which they could reckon up on their side ^d.

^c III. 620. *ad med.* in Jerem. xx.

^d III. 477, 478. *Præfatio lib. decimi octavi in Isaiam.*

“ Nor am I ignorant, what a difference of opinions there is among men, not merely concerning the mystery of the Trinity, (the most correct way of declaring which is to confess our ignorance of it,) but concerning other doctrines of the church, for instance, concerning the resurrection, and the state of souls and of the flesh of men (*after death*); concerning the promises of blessings to come, in what manner they ought to be received; and the proper method of understanding the Revelation of John, which if we literally construe, we must Judaize; if we have explained it, as written, after a spiritual manner, we shall appear to gainsay the opinions of many of the ancients, Tertullian, Victorinus, Lactantius, among the Latins, and among the Greeks, to pass over the rest, of Irenæus bishop of Lyons, whom alone I shall mention: against whom Dionysius, bishop of the church of Alexandria, a most eloquent man, wrote an elegant work, ridiculing the fabulous conceit of the millennium; and of a Jerusalem upon earth, golden and adorned with jewels; the rebuilding of the temple; the blood of victims; the rest of the sabbath day; the outrage of circumcision; marriages, childbirths, education of children, dainties and feasting, and the servitude of all the Gentiles; and again wars, and armies, and triumphs, and the slaughter of the vanquished, and the death of the sinner an hundred years old. He was answered in two books by Apollinarius, whom not merely the people of his own persuasion, but so far at least as this question is concerned, a very great number of the orthodox themselves, profess to follow: so that my mind even now misgives me,

“ what an host of furious enemies must be stirred
“ up against me, *if I persist.*”

The above passage, and others of the same kind, which have been cited in the second part of this discussion, are not only unexceptionable testimonies, as coming from adversaries, to the antiquity of the doctrine, and to the extensive reception which it had obtained in the church from the earliest times, but specimens also of the mode of reasoning generally employed against it, by the most eloquent and powerful of its opponents. Their favourite weapon seems to have been irony: they ridiculed and burlesqued the notion of a millennium, in all possible ways, branding its advocates with the odious and offensive names of chiliasts, Judaizers, Ebionites; and we may take it for granted, distorting and caricaturing their opinions, the more effectually to hold them up to laughter and contempt.

This was not the proper way to decide on the merits of a controversy, which related to so grave a subject not only as the right interpretation of the prophecies of scripture, but also as the true nature of the rewards proposed in another life, to the faith and obedience of Christians, in this; nay even, as the very exaltation, which all sects and denominations of Christians concur in believing to constitute the proper reward and enjoyment of a triumphant Messiah, for the value of the merit of all that he did and submitted to, in his capacity of a suffering one. For that each of these things is intimately concerned in the truth or falsehood of the doctrine of the millennium, must be very evident. If there be such a thing as the temporal reign of Jesus Christ on earth, as the supreme possessor of all the

sovereignties of mankind; will any one deny, that the personal enjoyment and administration of such an empire by Jesus Christ, must constitute a main part of his personal glory and exaltation? and if there is to be such a dispensation as the millenary, in the privileges and blessings of which all the faithful, to a greater or a less degree, will actually be admitted to partake; will any one deny that the fact of such admission, the enjoyment, in any degree, of such privileges and blessings, must constitute much of the proper reward even of the faithful? I hope, indeed, to make it appear hereafter, that so far as a reward is promised to the faithful at all; that is, a reward which presupposes merit, and in the kind or degree of the good conferred, is critically proportioned to the implied deserts of the receivers; no other reward is proposed to the faithful, for their obedience and well-doing in this life, but the enjoyments and blessings of the millennium, in the next.

If I can form any reasonable conjecture about the sentiments of the advocates of the millennium, in ancient times, from such of their writings as have come down to us; if I know any thing of the opinions of the most rational and soberminded of its supporters still; and in particular, if I am not altogether ignorant of my own views and expectations concerning it—I cannot hesitate to affirm that they either very greatly mistake, or very grossly pervert and misrepresent our conceptions of the nature and purposes of this dispensation, who charge us with entertaining a sensual and carnal idea of the kingdom of Christ; and attempt to raise a prejudice against us on that account. Yet what says Jerome, in the sequel of the passage last quoted? “I do not envy

“ these persons, (*their opinions*,) if they are so fond
“ of earth, as to miss and desire again earthly en-
“ joyments in the kingdom of Christ, and after a
“ surfeit of meat and drink, till the throat and the
“ belly are crammed full, seek next for those things
“ which are underneath the belly.” And how does
he reason, when, after admitting that we must still
believe, in opposition to the heretic, that there will
be a resurrection of the flesh ; he proceeds : “ Not
“ that, after rising again, we are to eat and drink,
“ as our millenarians will have it, and that im-
“ mortal and incorruptible bodies are to be sup-
“ ported by earthly aliments : otherwise, where
“ there is meat and drink, diseases also come next ;
“ where there are diseases, a physician must be
“ called in ; where there are physicians, there are
“ frequently deaths : and then again a resurrection,
“ and a new round of the same kind of existence.”

It must appear to a sound and orthodox millenarian a novel discovery, that the necessary consequence of his theory, like the dogmas of the Epicurean philosophers of old, is to lead by a perpetual cycle to the succession of the same state of things, as at present constituted, over and over again. But the foundation even of this objection, absurd as it is, rests on the hypothesis, that the state of the world, moral or physical, under the millennium, will be exactly the counterpart of the state of things, moral and physical, which exists at present. The foundation of an argument, so supported, has been already overthrown. The millenarian theory, as I have often observed, contemplates no mere renewal, or rather continuation of the present state of things ; but instead of that, the substitution of a scheme and con-

dition of being, moral and physical, comparatively entirely new. Before the millennium can be established, old things must have almost totally passed away; and every thing, compared with what it once was, must have become as good as new. If it is not to be so, the millennarian cannot understand why the arrival of the appointed period of that dispensation should be called, *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*—an end or conclusion of this period of being: and the beginning of the millenary œconomy be the termination and consummation of the present mundane system: still less, why the constitution and character of nature, whether moral or physical, as then to result, should be described by our Saviour, as a *παλιγγενεσία*—a regeneration; either a making of things anew, or a becoming of things new. Great must be the change to be expected, both in the internal and external constitution of nature, to justify such language as this, which implies little less than a new creation, and almost the production of every thing *de novo*, out of nothing.

If such a change is in any sense the continuation of that which existed before, it supposes at least the preliminary purification of this state from every defect and imperfection, which debases its excellence and adulterates its purity, at present; and if it is to continue and reflect any of the visible properties or phenomena of the existing state of things, it must be only of the good and perfection, which are still discernible in it, amidst the traces of evil and imperfection, which are not less perceptible also. In this sense, the new creation, under the millennium, may be after all, only the just natural condition of the old, under the present state of things: at least, if

we admit, with Aristotle, that the natural state of a subject is the utmost perfection of which it is capable.

And, indeed, where shall we think of finding the just representation of what a thing is, considered as what it should be and what it may be, in any state or constitution of its being, above or below this proper standard of its perfection? to which too much of excellence would be not less repugnant, than too little. The proper natural state of every subject must be measured by its own capacities, and as it is compared with things of like kind. The possible standard of human perfection, while human nature continues as it is, is as much below the excellence of the angelical, as it is superior to the ordinary degree of virtue, which actually exists in the world. Yet we must form our conceptions of this standard from what human nature as such, might be, and what human nature would be, were it divested of all which debases or vitiates it at present: and not from what it is. Is the gold, as obtained from the mine, or the same substance purified and refined in the fire, the more just representation of the natural perfection of that mineral? Is the helplessness of childhood, the imbecility of old age, or the vigour and energy of maturity, the proper image of the natural capabilities of the human frame?

In short, nothing can be more just and certain than that the true natural state of any thing, is the state of its natural perfection. Any other state but that, must be either above or below the natural degree of its perfection; and therefore equally unnatural to the subject in question; equally inconsistent with the proper measure of its perfection,

which may be exceeded and passed beyond, as well as fallen short of, or not come up to. The world, then, as at present constituted, with so much of alloy to debase and vitiate its purity, is not in a natural state; and the existing standard of its perfection is not the standard of which it is capable. The palingenesia, or millenary regeneration, may so far elevate and improve the degree of its actual perfection, as to bring it up to its possible one, and to place it in a state of nature; which compared with what exists at present, will doubtless be as good as new; and therefore, be not only the perfecting of the old, but so far, a regeneration of it also. But we must not expect an heaven upon earth, nor all the perfection of angels among men, even under the millennium; both which would be as much beyond the just natural standard of what the present world is capable of being, and of what it ought to be, as what it is, or the actual state of things in it at present, is below it.

Among the physical evils of the present system, disease and death are certainly not the least. But under the regenerated system of the millennium, if there will be no more death, there can be no more disease; or if there will be no more disease, there can be no more death. Jerome could not be ignorant, that they who maintain the futurity of the first resurrection, maintain also that they who are raised on that occasion, as much as those who are raised on the last, are raised to die no more, neither in the literal, nor in the figurative sense. “Blessed and
“holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection;
“over these the second death hath no power^e.” In

^e Rev. xx. 6.

which respect, the subjects of the first resurrection enjoy an exclusive advantage over those of the second; of whom though none can die any more in the literal sense, numbers, nevertheless, are liable to a still worse death, that of eternity, in the figurative or spiritual sense.

Nor should I suppose that Jerome was ignorant, though for the rhetorical effect of his argument he might choose to forget, that albeit the advocates of the millennium believe in the restoration to life, at the first resurrection, of the same bodies which before existed in this world; and in the possession of all those members, which ministered as instruments to their wants or their pleasures in this life; they do not expect them to be raised, with the same passions and propensities, the same lusts and desires, which prompted to the indulgence of the pleasures of sense, and led to the abuse of their natural instruments, in the former life. These lusts and desires are that will of the flesh, opposed to the will of the spirit, and to the law of righteousness, which constitutes the taint and corruption of our moral nature, in its present condition; which is born with us into the world; and in resisting and controlling which, consists the main part of the discipline and probation to which we are subjected in this life. Men will not be raised to life again, either on the first or on the last occasion, to undergo this trial and this discipline again, though all upon each occasion may be raised in the first instance in the flesh; and therefore, how many soever may be raised on the first resurrection, and raised in the flesh, in which they slept, it will not be to a renewal of the old contest between the spirit and the flesh; to a reiterated

struggle with the same carnal lusts and desires as before.

The members of the body ; the natural organs of the various senses ; are the gifts of our Creator, as much as the endowments of our spiritual and intellectual part. The first pair of the human race were formed in the possession of them all, before the purity and perfection of their original constitution, had been depraved and corrupted by the effects of the first transgression. Were they endued with any thing, which they were not intended to have used ; or the use of which, under such circumstances, would necessarily have been sinful? Is it not rather an assertion verging upon blasphemy, to say that the Maker of the human frame, bestowed on his work originally any faculty of enjoyment, or instrument of action, or organ of sense, the direct and simple use of which, according to its proper purpose and intention, must necessarily be criminal, and repugnant to the will and appointment of its Creator?

St. Paul has taught us that the most natural and indispensable functions of mere animal existence, even such ordinary and unavoidable acts as eating and drinking, sleeping and walking, or the like, may yet be so ennobled and sanctified by a religious end and direction, by an habitual reference to the glory of God, as to constitute an acceptable offering, and to be the reasonable or rational service of man towards his Maker, as much as his most spiritual and intellectual energies, equally devoted and consecrated^f. We are commanded to aspire at this spi-

^f Rom. xii. 1. 1 Cor. x. 31.

ritualization of the animal and inferior nature, and at this union and devotion both of body and soul, in the common offering of a daily sacrifice to their common Creator, even in this present life, during which the desires of sense are perpetually urging us, and sometimes with uncontrollable violence, to the abuse of both body and soul, in acts and energies the most contrary to the will, and therefore the most dishonouring to the glory, of their Maker: and doubtless it is our duty to obey this command, and to aim at this absolute degree of perfection, in the refinement of thought, word, and deed, to a sinless degree of purity, even in the present life. But it is impossible that we should ever fully obey this command, or realize this ideal picture of moral innocence and perfection, in the present state of our probation. The utmost which human obedience can achieve, in its struggle with natural infirmity and natural corruption, is not to yield to temptations, which nevertheless will be felt; to wage a contest against its own lusts and passions, which will never cease, with the possibility of not being defeated, with the chance of maintaining its ground, perhaps to the last. But as to that faultless and immaculate, though not inconceivable, state of things—in which such a being as man, and placed in such a world as the present, endowed with every faculty of enjoyment, and surrounded by all the objects of desire and attraction, shall yet be in no danger of feeling even a criminal emotion; of forming even an improper wish; much less of giving effect to it in action; it is not to be expected in this life, it cannot subsist among men as at present constituted. If it is to be the actual state of things under any form or modifica-

tion of the present system, it must be, under such a dispensation as the millenary, previous to which the present system will have undergone a mighty and wonderful change for the better; in consequence whereof mankind themselves may again exist on the face of the same earth, and in the integrity of the same nature, corporeal and incorporeal, as at present, to exemplify the hitherto unexampled phenomenon of such a being as man, a compound of flesh and spirit, living the life of a spiritual essence in a material frame, and in the midst of a material and sensible world; submitting the will of his inferior in entire subjection to the will of his superior nature, and the will of his superior to the good pleasure and direction of his holy Creator.

The philosophers of antiquity were able to conceive an idea, that was just and accurate, of this moral perfection of the human nature: reason was competent to teach them, what ought to be the subjection of the animal part of man, to the intellectual; and to shew them the faultlessness and beauty of the resulting character, where this subordination was complete and absolute. Such a character has Aristotle delineated in his picture of the temperate man; *ὁ σώφρων*: the abstract exemplar of moral perfection, or of what a being of a compound nature like man, would be, who united all the virtues of which he was capable in that character, as such; and almost identical with his *φρόνιμος*, or wise man, strictly so called; understanding by wisdom, the perfection of goodness, as well as of intelligence. In this character, or in one which resembled this, the harmony of both the component parts of human nature; the submission of the worse to the better; the subserviency of the

will of the flesh, to the dictates of reason ; the union of the faculties, both of body and soul, in the same spiritual service, having for its exclusive object the glory of the Creator, in the spotless purity of the creature—would be perfect and complete.

But it is needless to add, that though the Stagyrite, or Plato, might conceive the idea of such a picture, and draw it, as they have done, with a masterly hand, they had never seen it realized in the person of man : they could point to no living instance of any such perfection, nor refer to it as what had been seen in the person of any before their time : and we may safely undertake to say, that the world never saw any such, nor ever heard of its existence among men, from the time when Adam ceased to be what God first made him, until the appearance of Jesus Christ. Whether the sages of old thought that their own systems of philosophy, if reduced to practice, were capable of forming it, is another question : if they did, it was still only as on a small and limited scale, and only as in rare and solitary instances ; and the most confident among them in the theoretical perfection of his principles, would have been the first to exclaim of this practical illustration of their efficiency,

No child, in limbs of double form arrayed !

No fish so strange, beneath the plough displayed !

No yeaning she-mule, that a dam were made !

JUVENAL, xiii. 65.

The nearest approach to the perfection of this ideal moral character, which was to be observed in the world at large, is that degree of virtue, which Aristotle denominates *ἐγκράτεια*, or continence ; a virtue whose name implies that its essence consists in containing, restraining, or resisting something ; in mas-

tering some emotion; in not giving way to some impulse, which nevertheless is felt; and consequently, which must be wrong, or it would not require to be restrained. The best man, in the complex of moral agents, according to the most sagacious observer of mankind, among the philosophers of old, was he who approximated most closely to the perfection of the temperate man, without actually coming up to it. The grand distinction which he draws in his moral philosophy between the two characters is this: not that in action, and to all outward appearance, they may not be said to agree; nor that they do not both act from the same principle of duty and sense of right; but that there is a great difference in the frame and temper of their minds within. The rebellious principle of his nature is not subdued in the continent man; in the temperate man it is: it has a will and inclination, opposed to reason, in the one; it has no will nor wish, but what is in harmony with reason, in the other: it is controlled, but not without a struggle, in the one; it submits, and without all resistance, in the other: it pays an involuntary homage to reason, in the one, but a willing and cheerful one, in the other. In a word, the continent man acts against the inclination and tendency of his own desires, but the temperate man, agreeably to them; desires which are both strong and criminal, in the one case, but moderate and innocent, in the other. The corruption of nature, then, makes itself felt in the one, but is quite imperceptible in the other; the continent man must be pronounced, at first sight, a compound character, who has both a better and a worse principle of action within him;

the temperate man is to all appearance, an individual, simple, and uniform being, in whom there is nothing discoverable which is not rational, pure, and intellectual. The continent man might become the opposite character, if he would; the temperate man can never be otherwise than what he is: the former could relish and enjoy those very pleasures, from which he abstains because they are criminal, either in their kind, or their degree; the latter has no longer any taste for the pleasures of sin at all; a criminal indulgence, either in kind or in degree, would excite in him only disgust.

Will any one deny that the first of these characters is but a just picture of the holiest and most perfect of saints in this life? that their holiness and their perfection, however great, are after all, only the exemplification of Aristotle's continent man? Will it be disputed, on the other hand, that the opposite character is the exact conception of what man was intended to be, as he issued from the hands of his Creator? and that the realization of this conception in practice is that abstract standard of perfection, which St. Paul denominated our reasonable service, and commanded us to aim at continually, in our daily conversation, whether we could ever attain to it, or not?

If, however, the former, imperfect as it is, is the utmost approach to the consummate moral character, which even the best of men are capable of effecting in the present life—what, may we ask, is the degree of perfection ordinarily attained to by the world at large, who constitute the great mass of professing Christians? No writer of antiquity has

borne a stronger and plainer testimony to the natural depravity of the human heart^g; or done more by his admirable descriptions of the virtues, and vices, the passions, and the characteristics of mankind, to illustrate and confirm the scriptural doctrine of original sin, and of our predisposition to evil rather than to good, than Aristotle. He lays it down as a never-failing criterion that a thing is morally wrong, if we are naturally inclined towards it; that the contrary is morally right, if we are naturally averse to it: that we have not yet formed the habit of virtue, not yet got rid of the leaven of natural corruption, while we continue to feel a pain or a difficulty in obeying the dictates of right reason; while we are still capable of a secret pleasure and satisfaction in disobeying them; or in allowing ourselves a single indulgence, which that reason would forbid.

Doubtless, then, a philosophic observer, like Aristotle, would never have thought of seeking for his perfect moral character, in the persons of the great bulk of mankind; neither must we look for the exemplification of St. Paul's rule of excellence, amidst the mass of professing Christians. Yet notwithstanding this, the pinnacle of excellence, which he has defined, was marked out for the attainment of all; the model of perfection, which he has proposed, was proposed for the imitation of all: and the obligation to aspire at that pinnacle, and to realize that picture in themselves, is just as much incumbent upon all, whether they can successfully effect it, or not. What, then, we are commanded to do, in this life; and what we are bound to attempt to do, whether we can effect it or not, in this life; and

^g *Ethica Nicom.* ii. viii. 3. ix. 4, &c.

what, if we could but attain to it, would be the acme of our perfection, and the glory of our nature, in this life: viz. the spiritualization of our animal part—the harmony of reason and passion, of the understanding and the will, in the same preference of ends, and the same selection of means; in the objects of desire or pursuit, and in the modes or degrees of indulgence; in the habitual reference of thought, word, and deed, to the honour and praise of God; whose essential purity and goodness would thus be sensibly reflected in every lineament of his own moral creation—this state of things, I say, which constitutes the abstract, ideal perfection of the present life, where it can never be actually realized, cannot be unworthy of the millenary dispensation, under which, if there be any such thing as the millennium itself, it will assuredly take place. Let us, then, hear no more idle declamation about eating or drinking, or any other sensible act, as if they were necessarily criminal in themselves; or as if the blessed possessors of the kingdom of the saints, and heirs of immortality, could any longer be liable to surfeit, disease, or death; or be in danger of being corrupted and debauched to riot and excess, by the plenty which the rich goodness of God may then supply for all his creatures, rational and irrational alike.

To Jerome's further observation, that immortal and incorruptible bodies, such as those may be expected to be, which will be raised from the dead, stand in no further need of animal support; we may reply, that his assumption itself, for ought we know to the contrary, is mistaken; that immortal essences themselves may be in need of a proper ali-

ment of their own, analogous to that which supports our bodies here. At least, we read in scripture that God gave the Jews bread from heaven, when he provided manna for their subsistence; and that man did eat angel's food, when he ate of manna. We may still more confidently reply, that though an immortal, incorruptible body may stand in no further need of animal support, it may yet be capable of it. Witness the many instances, recorded in the Old Testament, when angelic essences appeared in a bodily shape, and partook of the food of men: witness also the numerous occasions, on which our Saviour himself, even after his resurrection, and clothed as he was with a new or a glorified body yet ate and drank with the apostles: a circumstance, on which we find St. Peter expressly insisting, in his discourse to Cornelius^h. Shall we say, with the author of the book of Tobit, and with Josephus, that these eatings and drinkings of the inhabitants of heaven in the company of men, upon earth, passed in vision or appearance merely, or that they really partook of what they seemed to partake of? For if they did, then even an immortal, incorporeal, and spiritual nature is capable, under such and such circumstances, of sharing in the aliment provided for the creatures of time and sense, and necessary to their continued existence.

But not, it may be rejoined, except as endued with a body. And when, we may answer, was an angelic or spiritual substance made visible to the eyes of sense, except in a corporeal form and shape? and who ever imagined that the saints, who will be raised under the millennium, will not be raised, en-

^h Acts x. 41.

dued with a body? The resurrection, under any circumstances, in its strict and proper sense, is a resurrection of the body, and not of the spirit, as such; for nothing can be supposed to rise again, which is not supposed to have died; and the body of man alone, not the spirit, is that which dies, or dissolves into nothing by death. The spirit or soul of man is not deprived of its vitality by death, but exists somewhere, without the interruption of its being, in the interval between death and the resurrection: nor can it be said, even then, to be raised again *per se*, but only to be reunited to the body which it had belonged to before; or at least, to be raised again merely *in* the body, in which it had previously existed. The first resurrection, then, is no doubt a resurrection of the flesh as such; and each of the saints, as he fell asleep in Christ, might say with holy Job, in contemplation of that event, "I know
" that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand
" at the latter day on the earth: and though after
" my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh
" shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and
" mine eyes shall behold, and not another" *in my stead*; (nor, as the spirit of the passage also implies, even I myself, in any other body but what once before was mine.)

It is true, we are taught by scripture to expect that though the bodies of the saints, when raised again, may be substantially the same with those which slept; they will differ materially from them in their qualities and properties: and it seems only consistent with reason, that the same analogy should hold good in the life to come, between the external body and the soul which inhabits it, as pre-

vails between them in this life. A mortal and corruptible body will no longer constitute the suitable habitation of a glorified and immortal spirit; and the appointed natural organ or instrument of that which is now all pure and sanctified, must be refined and hallowed also. Stephen Gobarus, in his work above mentionedⁱ, enumerates this among other opinions, anciently entertained—that the human body or tabernacle, before the fall, was invested with a robe of light; that is, surrounded by a shechinah—which served it instead of a covering: the loss whereof was the consequence of the first transgression, and gave occasion to the sense of nakedness, of which our first parents became conscious immediately afterwards. The idea of the appropriation of such a paradisiacal vesture to the most glorious of God's creatures, while the image of his Maker was still perfect and unsullied in him, is an elegant one; whether it be a scriptural notion, or not. And whatever we may think of this opinion, or of the probability of the recovery, under the millenary dispensation, of any such robes of paradise; still we may conceive it possible for the bodies of the saints to become, at their resurrection from the dead, immortal and glorious, yet not to lose their identity with what they were before: no more than did our Saviour's, who rose from the dead in the body in which he suffered; nor than Enoch's and Elijah's, who were translated to heaven in the bodies in which they lived. Yet the body of our Saviour, after his resurrection, was doubtless a glorified body; such as had been manifested while he was yet alive to his disciples, at the transfiguration; and such as it was

ⁱ Phil. Bibl. p. 283, l. 30. *ad sin.*

manifested, after his ascension, to the eyes of St. Stephen, and of St. Paul, respectively. The question, which we are considering at present, is not affected by this supposed change in the bodily accidents of the saints. If the corporeal frame of the saints, after the first resurrection, only becomes like to those of the angels, when they appeared at different times; or those of our first parents, before the fall; or, as we may still more confidently assume that they will, like that of our Lord, in which he rose from the dead; they will be capable of partaking of meat and drink, whether they may require it or not. Meat and drink were appointed for the sustenance of the human pair, before the fall, and at a time when the bodies, in which they had been created, were still designed to be as immortal, as the souls which inhabited them.

There may be persons, too, who would meet the objection of Jerome, such as it is, by contending that although the bodies of the saints, at the first resurrection, and during the millennium, may differ in many respects from those in which they passed their term of probation here; yet they will not all at once assume their most perfect and glorious form; nor until the end of the period of the millenary œconomy, and with the transition of the things of earth into those of heaven. This notion is not inconsistent with the implicit testimony of scripture; and we have seen that it was entertained by Tertullian. It is in unison too, with the general analogy of the millenary dispensation, in other respects, as a scheme interposed between the end of time and the beginning of eternity; as partaking in its particulars both of matter and of spirit; of earth and of

heaven; and as neither the one nor the other exclusively, but in some measure made up of each.

In another instance, we find Jerome arguing against the chiliasts, as follows; when, after some observations on their literal construction of those passages of the prophets, which predicted that the wolf and the lamb should lie down together, or the like^k; he proceeds: "But let us ask them this question also, what there is worthy of the majesty of the Lord, in the wolf and the lamb's feeding together, and the leopard's lying down with the kid, and the lion's eating straw, and a little child's putting his hand on the hole of asps? Unless, perhaps, according to the fables of the poets, they mean to restore us the golden age of Saturn, when wolves and lambs shall feed together, and the rivers run down with new wine, and the sweetest honey trickle from the leaves of trees, and all parts be filled with springs of milk^l."

To the old charge of a sensual paradise, which is insinuated in these last words, we need not reply any more. I will further observe upon it only, that when Jerome compares the state of things expected by the millennarians, to the fabulous golden age of the poets, his very comparison might have taught him that the picture of happiness, thus held up to contempt, as visionary and childish, was one which the common sense, or the natural feelings, of all mankind had concurred in conceiving as the only ideal pattern of possible innocence, purity, and bliss, that they themselves could imagine, in opposition to the guilt, corruption, and misery, which actually existed^m.

^k Isaiah xi.

^l III. 101. *ad med.* in *Isaiæ xi.*

^m *Hesiodi Opera et Dies*, 108—125. *Virgil. Georgic. I.*

This dream of the poets is one, in which our best and purest sensibilities are deeply interested; and to which, though we know it to be a dream, our imaginations delight to recur, when they would turn to the contemplation of spotless innocence, and happiness without alloy, by way of relief from the sickening spectacles of wickedness and misery, which we see in the world around us. It should be any thing, therefore, but justly matter of reproach to the doctrine of the millennium, that it embodies in a real fact, and under a substantial form, all that the human imagination has ever been able to conceive, or the human tongue to express, of the perfection of social happiness, among the beings which exist in conjunction upon this earth. But we may go even further, and claim these very dreams and visions of the poets, as so many presumptive evidences of the futurity, not less than of the possibility, of the millenary dispensation itself. For why, may we ask, are these pictures of the fancy, these fabulous descriptions of a golden age, fit likenesses to represent what the advocates of the millennium personify in their anticipations of that dispensation, except that both are alike the idea and delineation of the same reality; the one of a past, the other of a future state of things, which answers to each of them; the one of a time, when sin and misery were not yet; the other of one, when sin and misery shall both be no more? I see the vestiges of a traditional paradise, in this dream of the poets; and I acknowledge the futurity of a second garden of Eden, in the antitype of paradise—the millennium.

And hence, an easy answer may be returned to the first part of the above observations, where Je-

rome demanded what there was worthy of the majesty of the Lord, in such and such effects; for what, we may reply, is there unworthy of it, in them? If it is not *worthy*, surely it is not *unworthy*, of the divine Majesty, to produce such effects. Yet what is miraculous, and contrary to nature, as at present constituted, cannot imply less than a supernatural agency to bring it to pass; and what requires a supernatural agent is so far worthy of Omnipotence itself. It depends further only on the nature of the end to be answered by the effect, whether it is worthy of the divine goodness also; and therefore, in all respects worthy even of the divine Majesty.

Now no one will deny that to change the natures and instincts of animals from wild and ferocious, to mild and tame, is to produce a miraculous effect; and is so far worthy of the divine power: and if the end of that change be the eradication of moral and physical evil, incompatible with the divine purity and goodness, from all branches or provinces of its creation alike, by establishing the universal reign of peace, amity, and concord, and by the due subjection of creatures inferior in the scale of gradation to higher; no one will deny that it is worthy also of the divine benevolence, and therefore, on both these accounts, becoming the divine Majesty.

But, indeed, the question of the divine Majesty is not the subject directly concerned in the descriptions thus given by the prophets, of the future state of things under the reign of Christ. They are intended only to portray the innocence, and simplicity, of that period; the sense of security, the freedom from injury and outrage, at the hands of every thing

once capable of producing it, and in behalf of every thing once capable of suffering it; the harmony, friendship, and charity, the total absence of violence, and even the disposition to do harm or evil, and the consequent absence of fear and danger, which will then subsist among all orders of creatures, living in common. And in order to draw this picture the more forcibly, they select and insist on the most expressive strokes; associating in friendly union the most hostile natures and propensities, by speaking of the wolf and the lamb as feeding together; shewing the most savage disposition reclaimed to gentleness, in the lion's eating straw like the ox; the most timid and defenceless as secure from injury, the most simple and unwary as safe from risk, in the infant's playing with the asp, and the weaned child's laying its hand on the cockatrice' den.

But the most singular part of Jerome's argument is that which follows^m: "But should they make
" answer, that all this is to be expected from the
" blessedness of such times; so that without the
" least harm to any thing, men should have the
" thorough enjoyment of all kinds of goods, let me
" tell them, that nothing is good but virtue, and no-
" thing evil but vice But as to riches, and
" health of the body, and the abundance of all things,
" and their contraries, poverty, sickness, and want,
" even with Gentile philosophers they are counted
" neither among goods nor among evils, but are
" called neuters or indifferent. For this reason, the
" Stoics also, who agree with our doctrine in most
" things, call nothing good, except honesty and virtue
" only, nothing evil, except moral depravity . . We

^m Loc. cit.

“ have just alluded to these things—to convict our
“ Judaizing brethren of snoring in the profoundest
“ sleep.”

If Jerome, or any opponent of the doctrine of the millennium, has no better arguments to bring against it than the revival of an old Stoical paradox, the case is at an end on his part. This father was doubtless too rational and pious a man, and too habitually impressed with a just notion of the providence of God, as of that which dispenses to its own creatures, all the good and evil of the present life, not to have been cautious at any other time, how he maintained that nothing was good but virtue, nothing was evil but vice; and that every thing else, which the world calls good and evil, and which the temporal providence of God distributes as it thinks fit, was neither the one nor the other.

The philosophers of antiquity designated by the general name of *δυνάμεις*, *capabilities*, *powers*, or *faculties*, every thing which in its own nature was indifferent to a right or a wrong use; and therefore, might become, as they conceived, either a good or an evil, a blessing or a curse, both to its possessor and to others, as it was well or ill applied. Under this denomination, they classed all the controverted or controvertible goods, as such; the virtues of the body; the gifts of fortune; a variety of natural, and an equal variety of acquired abilities; every thing, in short, but virtue, that is, virtue in its perfect state; and perfect moral virtue, more particularly. As to the virtues of the intellect, they did not call them strictly *δυνάμεις*, or powers; but they considered them compatible with moral vice, notwithstanding.

Now, whatsoever the moralists and philosophers of old so defined and so classified, as something of a neutral character, and neither good nor evil in itself—a Jew or a Christian, if he had correct notions of the providence of God, would necessarily pronounce to be of his dispensation. And from the dispensations of the divine providence, towards its creatures, in the present life, both reason and religion ought to convince us, that nothing can properly emanate but good. God can be the author of nothing which is absolutely evil, and is bestowed as such; of nothing which is partly evil, and partly good, if given as evil; of nothing which is neither evil nor good, but of a nature indifferent to both, as bestowed in the same capacity. Whatever proceeds from him, directly or indirectly, we may take it for granted is and must be, either good in itself, or designed for an use and a purpose which make it so. Even the penal dispensations of his providence would come under this last description; and as to “every good and every perfect gift,” it “is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.”

If those things, then, which the ancient philosophers denominated powers, such as riches, health, and the other particulars enumerated by Jerome, proceed immediately from the divine providence; doubtless, it is because they are possessed of a nature of their own, which makes them fit to be the dispensations of his bounty; that is, because they are good. The contrary to these his providence also distributes; whether directly or indirectly, makes no difference; and though it is no more possible to deny without an absurdity that these are evils, than

that their contraries are goods, yet they are not dispensed by the divine providence simply as evils, nor for the sake of their use as evils, but mediately, if not immediately, for the sake of good. It is not the evil of the recipient of such dispensations, which is consulted by them, but his good; to which, it has been ordained by their Author itself, that they shall be capable of subserving in various ways: and, whatever they may be in themselves, yet like distasteful medicines, which the physician nevertheless administers for the sake of the health of his patient, this peculiarity of their final end and purpose renders even their judicial or corrective nature compatible with the source, from which their dispensation proceeds.

No enlightened Jew, then, nor pious Christian, can hesitate to believe that the temporal blessings of God are given and bestowed as goods; and therefore that they have the nature of good. But they may be abused by their receivers, and practically converted into evils. Who, then, in this case, is to bear the blame? the receiver, or the thing received? No doubt, the receiver: who by perverting what was good in itself, and capable of a good use and direction, for which it was given, to an effect and purpose, repugnant to its own nature, and to the intention of him who bestowed it, contracts the double guilt of defeating the purpose of God, and of bringing a calumny on his gifts, which were designed solely for good, yet have become in improper hands, accidentally, the means of evil.

If our acquired attainments are all founded on our natural capacities; they are to be considered the dispensations of the providence of God, as much

as any thing else. Now among these we may reckon the virtues themselves ; at least the perfect virtues. No man would be born either perfectly virtuous, or perfectly vicious, but every one would be born with a capacity merely for perfect virtue or perfect vice, were the doctrine of the corruption of our nature set aside ; and the perfect character, whether good or bad, would after all, be mainly the work of the subject's own formation. Still less can a being like man be naturally endued with the habit of perfect virtue, who is born with a decided propensity to sin and vice ; to overcome which, and to form any thing like the habit of virtue, in its stead, is purely the effect of the preventive and assisting grace of God. All this must have been well known to Jerome. Why, then, did he except even virtue, as distinct from the number of his things indifferent ; if that too must be derived from a source beyond ourselves, as well as every other good which we enjoy ?

Nor could he have been ignorant, that these very things which he enumerates among his *indifferentia*, and as neither good nor evil, were proposed to the Jews under the old dispensation, as the rewards of their obedience to all the commandments of God ; and that their contraries were the very things denounced and threatened against them, as the punishment of their disobedience. Did God promise them no good when he promised them the one ; nor denounce any evil against them, when he threatened them with the other ?

He must have been aware also, that the most remarkable of the favourites of Heaven, under the same dispensation—those persons particularly, on whom the divine providence was pleased to pour

the effusions of its benevolence, most largely in measure; and most variously in kind—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David, Solomon, and others—were the very persons distinguished above all their contemporaries by the possession of these controverted goods. What was their peculiar privilege, then, above any others of the creatures of the divine bounty, if it did not consist in the amplest and completest share of those goods, which Jerome calls indifferent?

Shall we say, they were thus distinguished because, in other respects, they were the fittest to be so? I admit this to the fullest extent; and I think the true point of view, in which we ought to regard these particular instances of the divine love and bounty, towards those who are most justly endeared to God, is that of the blessings which are thereby added, over and above, to the possession of the more essential preliminary requisites of virtue and goodness. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;” was our Saviour’s injunction to his disciples, “and all these things shall be added unto you;” meaning the blessings of food, clothing, and similar temporal goods. Godliness, in like manner says St. Paul, has the promise both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Why, then, should not an overflowing measure of every temporal blessing be naturally to be expected, under the millenary dispensation, even according to the ordinary rules of the course and operation of the divine providence? The first and most essential condition at least, without which its bounty could not act, will be abundantly supplied, in the worthiness of the recipients. The kingdom or society of saints;

” Matt. vi. 33.

the community of all the good and faithful belonging to the old and to the new dispensation alike, which will then be formed, under a common Lord and Master, Jesus Christ ; cannot be deficient in the qualities of faith and righteousness, to make them the fittest objects of every temporal blessing, which the word of God has at any time promised to such qualities, and which the providence of God has at any time vouchsafed to individuals or nations, the most distinguished by the possession of them.

As to the other topics of declamation, upon which Jerome, and the rest of the adversaries of the millenary doctrine, are not unfrequently found insisting; viz. the revival of animal sacrifices; the reinstatement of carnal observances; the renewal of the outrage done to nature by circumcision; and the like—I am ready to allow that were we really to look forward to the restoration of these things, under the millennium, it would seem to be a recurrence to the ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα, “ the weak and beggarly elements,” which St. Paul reproaches the Galatians with returning to, when they preferred the works of the law to the free gift of God, through Christ^o.

We cannot expect, indeed, to clear up every difficulty which may appear, at present, to lie in the way of such a mysterious doctrine, as that of the millenary dispensation: but with respect to this particular objection, the presumed revival, under the millennium, of such ceremonial and ritual observances as formerly prevailed under the legal œconomy; I apprehend it to be founded mainly, if not entirely, on the concluding chapters of Ezekiel, from

^o Gal. iv. 9.

chap. xl. to the end of the book: wherein the construction of a new temple; a new settlement of the tribes; and a fresh division or measurement of the country, begin to be described. That all this is intended to apply to any state of things under the millennium, as such, I do not yet see: and until it is shewn to be otherwise by the event, I shall rather believe it is meant to be fulfilled at the time of the restoration of the tribes, before even their conversion to Christianity as such; and before the appearance of Antichrist; much more before the commencement of any reign of Christ on earth. To enlarge upon this subject at present would occupy too much time, and besides would be foreign to our proper purpose.

What, then, is the result of the preceding arguments and observations? That, admitting the probable futurity of the event itself, the true view of the nature and constitution of the millenary scheme is that of a dispensation expressly interposed, for special and adequate reasons, between the termination of the present, which was always designed to have an end, and the commencement of the future, which is to continue through all eternity. It is neither the prolongation of that which *is*, nor the beginning of any thing absolutely *new*; but the restoration of that which *once* was. It is neither the œconomy of heaven anticipated; nor the sublunary state of earth perpetuated; but the scheme of paradise revived. It is an ἀποκατάστασις πάντων^p, a bring-

^p The notion of a constant succession or cycle of worlds, it is well known, was a tenet of the Epicurean philosophy; and in fact, a necessary consequence of their peculiar doctrines of the

ing of things back to their original state, from which they had previously declined and fallen away. We should no less mistake its true character, if we compared it to any thing which may hereafter exist in heaven, than if we judged of it by any thing which exists at present upon earth. To obtain a right conception of it, we must go back to the beginning of time; and consider what things were then, and what they were designed by their Creator always to have been, had not the freewill of men or of angels interfered with his purpose. Conceive the state of things before the fall to have continued undisturbed, for a thousand years—imagine the scheme of paradise to have been realized for this length of time, over the whole earth—and I think we shall have a just idea of what the millennium is destined to be: the justest perhaps, and the most complete, that we have the means of forming about it beforehand.

It is manifest, that the interposition of such a dispensation is naturally adapted to connect the present

formation of worlds by the concurrence of atoms, of the eternity of matter, and the like. The Stoics too maintained a periodic restitution, or renovation of all things.

Divin. Institt. vii. 18. 647: Lactantius quotes the following passage from the *Λόγος τέλειος* of Hermes Trismegistus. After describing a state of natural corruption and apostasy, it proceeds: *ἐπ' αὐν δὴ ταῦτα γένηται, ὃ Ἄσκληπιέ, τότε ὁ κύριος καὶ πατήρ καὶ θεὸς, καὶ τοῦ πρώτου καὶ ἑνὸς θεοῦ δημιουργὸς, ἐπιβλέψας τοῖς γενομένοις, καὶ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ βουλήσει ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις, τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀντερείσας τῇ ἀταξίᾳ, καὶ ἀνακαλεσάμενος τὴν πλάνην, καὶ τὴν κακίαν ἐκκαθήρῃ πῆ μὲν ὕδατι πολλῶ κατακλύσας, πῆ δὲ πυρὶ ὄξυτάτῳ διακαύσας, ἐνίοτε δὲ πολέμοις καὶ λοιμοῖς, ἤγαγεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀρχαῖον, καὶ ἀποκατέστησε τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κόσμον*—which very well illustrates the sense of this term, *ἀποκατάστασις*. Cf. the *Hermes Trismegistus*, ascribed to Apuleius, Opera, vol. ii. p. 310.

state of things, which is altogether calculated for time and sense, with that future one some time or other, which must be as exclusively adapted for eternity. It may serve as an easy and gradual passage from the œconomy of a material and visible world, to that of an immaterial and invisible. The happiness too, of this intermediate dispensation may be similarly related to that of the two, between which it is placed: the measure of felicity under the millennium as much exceeding the amount of good to be met with or enjoyed in the present state of being, as the beatitude of heaven is superior to the bliss of paradise. The interposition of such a dispensation, also, before the termination of the present world, and the commencement of the future one, serves a variety of positive uses, which might be sufficient, *a priori*, to warrant the expectation of it; with the statement of some of which I shall conclude this Dissertation.

First, the interposition of such a dispensation as the millenary, before the termination of the present world, is necessary to reconcile the facts of its actual constitution, with the nature of its original beginning; and to vindicate the majesty, goodness, and omnipotence of its Creator.

There can be no question that mankind was originally formed by his Maker in the image of his own purity and excellence; was designed for immortality and happiness, endowed with a nature, both sensible and spiritual, capable of them; and placed in a world, which while it abundantly supplied the means of rational and innocent enjoyment in the present life, would have served to conduct him, by a quiet

and gentle transition, to a state of spiritual existence in another. There can be just as little question, that the benevolent intention of the Creator in behalf of his own moral creatures, was defeated by their fall and transgression : and that the scheme of being—the kind of existence—which he had originally designed for them, was so far disturbed, deranged, and frustrated.

The actual state of things which has since been established upon earth, is therefore the substitution of a new scheme and œconomy of being, not originally contemplated by the Author of nature for his own moral creatures in particular, instead of that, which in his wisdom and goodness he had before devised for them : the final end of which new scheme and dispensation, it is easy to perceive, was partly judicial and partly remedial ; judicial, so far as it entailed a change for the worse upon the whole system of nature—positive evil for positive good ; disease and death for the privilege of immortality ; sorrow and misery for joy and bliss ; and every evil physical or moral, to which flesh and blood, from that time forward, have been heirs—remedial, so far as it was still designed to be a state of discipline and probation, intended to correct and retrieve as well as to punish ; by being subjected to which, and undergoing with patience their appointed trial, God's moral and responsible creatures might recover the good they had lost, and become the heirs of immortality and happiness as before.

Now the first cause to which this frustration of the original design of the Creator in the formation of man, and the production of the rest of nature, was due ; the act which disturbed the scheme of exist-

ence which he had planned for his creatures—and therefore the true source of the guilt, the *crimen delicti*, which required the infliction of a penal dispensation, or entailed the necessity of a remedy and corrective; are attributed in scripture to no part of God's own creation, as such; that is, to nothing, whether rational or irrational, which formed a constituent part of the system which he had recently brought into being; but to something which had an existence, and was actuated by a spirit of hostility to the Author of nature, before the production of any part of his present works. The first act of disobedience to the will of their Creator, on the part of any of his creatures who were capable of obeying or disobeying his will deliberately, as every reader of scripture is aware, was not the effect of their own suggestions, but of the malice and contrivance of the Tempter.

Yet what has been the practical consequence of an original act of transgression by the rational creation of God, instigated as that was by the cunning and subtlety of his enemy? To defeat, at least in appearance, the intentions of their Maker towards them; to disturb the whole plan of being which he had previously designed for his works; to mar the perfection of his productions, and to obliterate the image of the Creator from the face of the creature; to convert the preexistence of good, and good without admixture of evil, into more than an equality, and almost a preponderance of the opposite properties, through the whole of nature; to embitter the temporary happiness of his creatures with pain and misery; and to supersede the hope and assurance of a blessed immortality, by the terrible and not less

certain prospect of eternal death. And what is it, which has since been done by the Author of nature himself, in pursuance of his original design, or with a view still to carry it into effect? To contrive a remedy for the injury which his works have sustained from the malice of his enemy; to devise and set at work a scheme of counteraction, which will no doubt in the end succeed in defeating his hostility; but would never have been necessary had not *his* plots first been laid, and first successfully carried into effect.

This coexistence and mutual conflict of schemes and contrivances, directed to opposite results; this struggle between the principle of good and the principle of evil, which began with the fall of mankind, have been going on ever since; and are destined to last until the consummation of the present state of things. Both the adversaries of the millennium, and its advocates, agree in this; that the end of the present system of probation will likewise be the end of all physical and moral evil. The triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of God, in one word, over Satan, will then be complete and perpetual.

But the advocates of the antimillenary scheme, who suppose the consummation of this triumph to take place, by the immediate passage of the present state of things into the future one, which is destined to subsist through all eternity—are liable to the very serious objection that the power and sovereignty of the supreme Lord and Governor of the universe, the honour and majesty of the Almighty himself, are not vindicated upon their principles, in a manner which the necessity of the case requires; but are left exposed to a calumny, which cannot be conceived with-

out blasphemy: viz. that the original purposes of God, whatever they might be, could be *for ever* frustrated and defeated by the machinations of his enemy; that he was able, indeed, to counteract the plots and contrivances of the Devil, by plans and dispensations of his own; but that he could not prevent their interfering with his designs, nor disturbing the orderly course and consummation of the plans he himself had laid down: and though he might successfully resist, and at last surmount, the ascendancy of evil in opposition to good, yet that he could not prevent its taking partial effect, nor obtaining a temporary triumph.

Surely the majesty and omnipotence of the Creator of the universe are not adequately vindicated from such a calumny as this, if the original scheme which he himself designed for his own creation is not still sometime to be carried into effect; and carried into effect, *there*, where it was at first intended to be, viz. *upon* this earth; and for the benefit of all *his* creatures, whom he at first designed to be affected by it, viz. every thing that exists on the face of the earth: if the course of futurity does not yet demonstrate both to men and to angels, that no power, which is not infinite like his own, can defeat the will of the Omnipotent; no finite intelligence, however vast and comprehensive, can fathom the counsels of Divine wisdom, or vie with the inexhaustible resources of the Divine mind; no contingency, dependent on the will of a created, however free, an agent, can surprise the foreknowledge of the Omniscient; no scheme nor contrivance of evil, however projected and however executed, can interfere, except for a time and a purpose of his own appointment, with

the full effect of the pleasure of the infinitely Wise, the infinitely Powerful, the supremely Good and Holy.

The majesty and dignity of the Creator of the universe are rescued from this calumnious imputation, and asserted to the height of their deserving, by the contrary doctrine of the advocates of the millennium: a doctrine, which steps in, exactly where the necessity of the case requires it, to justify the ways of Providence throughout; to assimilate the final state of the present sublunary creation to its original beginnings; to reconcile the substitution of a scheme of penalties, remedies, or correctives, with the appointment of a faultless and immaculate dispensation of innocence and happiness at first; and to vindicate the absolute sovereignty of God over all his works, while it leaves inviolate the freewill and free-agency of the intellectual part of them in particular. The millennarian recognises in the interposition of his peculiar œconomy before the end of the present world, a recurrence to the first principle and design of its being—after the termination of an extraordinary dispensation, intended for a temporary purpose—which makes the past appear as though it had never been; and serves as a link to the coherency of earth and heaven, without which the course of providence in the transition from one to the other at last would be abrupt and defective, and contrary to its natural order; which is not from better to worse, and from worse to better; but from good to better—from excellence of one kind and degree, however great and diversified, to excellence of another and an higher description. The interposition of the millenary dispensation between this world and the next, will be a proof that the scheme which

the Author of nature originally devised for his own works, has never been changed, never been abandoned, never been superseded; but only suspended and deferred. It has given way for a time to a supplementary scheme; the necessity of which was due to no fault of the Creator, nor to any defect of the creature, but to the voluntary perversion of his Maker's gifts, and his own faculties, by that part of his works which alone was capable of abusing them; a scheme therefore, which must be transacted before the original one could yet take effect; a scheme, the duration of which its Author himself has appointed, and the transaction of which in his wisdom he has so contrived as to be subservient to his original purpose. When that duration is over, and with it the temporary œconomy to which it was conducive, the original design of the Author of the universe (a design which for six thousand years has been constantly kept in view) will yet be realized in its literal sense, and its entire effect, for the benefit of his creatures. Such a result, if it ever takes place, must be, in the strictest meaning of the terms, an ἀποκατάστασις πάντων—a παλιγγενεσία of the whole creation.

As the fathers of the church, even those who were most opposed to the millennium, had all the same just and scriptural notion of the true first cause of the evil, physical or moral, which exists at present amidst the works of God; it is very extraordinary, that, as the legitimate consequence of so just and scriptural a notion, they should not all have been converts to the doctrine of the millennium. These fathers were not like some sceptical Christians of modern times, disposed to doubt even of the existence

of the powers of evil ; but were unanimous in attributing to their activity an ubiquity approaching to omnipresence, and to their efficiency an influence almost on a par with omnipotence. The simplest Christian of ancient times was habitually impressed with the conviction of this truth ; that as all the good, within him or without him, was mediately or immediately to be referred to God, so all the evil, of which he was sensible or of which he was capable, was directly or indirectly to be ascribed to Satan. “ By all these things, therefore,” says Origen, “ the divine scripture teacheth us that there are certain unseen enemies, fighting against us, and it instructeth us that we ought to arm ourselves against them. For this reason likewise, the simpler sort of the believers in the Lord Jesus generally, think that all sins soever that men happen to have committed, are brought to pass by means of those contrary powers, impelling the minds of the offenders with a force beyond resistance, as was to be expected where powers of a superior order are found to engage in that invisible contest ; that is, were there not a Devil, nobody at all would do wrong ⁹.” As of the Devil himself, he tells us : “ The opinion most commonly received is, that this same Devil was an angel, and having become an apostate, persuaded very many of the angels to fall away together with himself, who also down to the present time are called his angels ^r.”

⁹ I. 138. F: De Princip. iii. 2. 1.

^r I. 48. C. De Princip. i. Præf. 6. Cf. Tertull. i. 81—85. Contra Marcion. ii. 10—12: iv. 33. De Testimonio Animæ, 3: 109. De Spectaculis, 2: v. 61. Apologeticus, 22,&c.—Lac-

With such a firm persuasion of the personal existence of the Devil and his angels; with such a clear perception of their enmity and opposition to God; and with such sensible evidence of their power and activity in the natural and in the moral world; it is almost incredible that the fathers of the church were not to a man advocates of the millenary scheme, concurring to anticipate with hope and confidence, the arrival of a time, when the superiority of good over evil, and of the powers of light over those of darkness, should no longer be a questionable fact even on the face of this earth, which, in its present constitution, exhibited the most lamentable proofs how equally they seemed to be opposed and balanced; how nearly commensurate in extent, and equipollent in intensity, were the wiles and contrivances of Satan to turn good into evil, with the constant endeavours and the multiform provisions of God to extract good from evil. The glory of the Creator obviously required that the Infinite and Omnipotent, as well as supremely Good, should not always continue to wage an equal, and much less, as it might sometimes appear, an unequal contest, against a creature of his own, though an apostate and rebellious creature; nor patiently endure for ever to have the free course of his designs impeded, much less defeated, by any agency however transcendant in comparison of human, yet immeasurably below omnipotence. But it is not enough to vindicate the majesty of the Almighty, and to resent the insult done to his authority, that when he interposes at last to put an end to this

tantius, iii. 29. 302, 303: vi. 4. 511. 512: 6. 517: 522—524: 22. 574: 23. 575, &c.

competition, and to coerce his adversary for ever, he effects his purpose by obliterating the present state of things, and annihilating his own creation, together with the evils that have so long infested it. It seems essential to its entire justification, that the same scene of being which has witnessed the indignity apparently done to the Most High, should witness the reparation of it also: and not fall back into nothing, and cease to have an existence, as soon as it is cleared of every thing hostile to God and goodness, at present mixed up with it. More reasonable it is to expect, that it should continue in its refined and purified state, for any length of time that he himself shall think fit to appoint—an adequate representation of the greatness and goodness of its Maker, and of what, as his work, it was always intended to be.

Again, the interposition of the millenary scheme, with its peculiar œconomy of retribution, is necessary to reconcile the doctrine of scripture, that we are justified and saved by faith, and by faith alone, with the promise of scripture, nevertheless, of a reward proportioned to works.

It is a necessary consequence of the doctrine of salvation by faith, that all who are justified, and saved, on that account, are justified freely, and without any regard to their personal works, and consequently to their personal deserts. A promise of rewards, on the other hand, in proportion to works, must be strictly in proportion to deserts: and therefore, it seems to be implied by the fact of such a promise, that in apportioning the future reward of those who are saved, their personal deserts will

be strictly taken into account. Now these two things, as thus stated, are evidently at variance. Salvation by faith excludes all regard to works, and therefore all difference of personal deserts; a reward of the good and righteous, in proportion to their works, must be in proportion to their deserts. Nor can I imagine any mode of reconciling them together, but this; that the doctrine of scripture, which relates to final acceptance irrespectively of the differences of personal desert, is in reference to one state of things; and the doctrine of scripture, which holds out the expectation of a reward in proportion to works, and therefore has respect to the differences of personal desert, is in reference to another. The former I consider to be the state of things, which is known by the name of eternal life, or is the condition of being, through all eternity, in the kingdom of heaven; the latter to be the state of things, under the millennium, and during the temporal reign of Christ on earth.

The matter of fact, involved in each of these statements, is in either case equally indisputable. It is equally certain that all who are saved, as such, are saved by faith in Jesus Christ; and by faith, without respect of works—and consequently, of differences of desert: and it is also certain that if any are to be rewarded in another life, for their conduct in the present life, that is, for their works, they must be rewarded in proportion to those works, and therefore in proportion to their deserts. Now, where the common quality of faith, as such, in a common Redeemer, through the same medium of the free gift or grace of God, is made the basis of a common salvation; how many soever may par-

take in that salvation, and how different soever in personal distinctions of character, they may be—they must all be justified and saved alike, and therefore all be thought worthy of justification and salvation alike. It is of the essence of a saving faith to level and equalize all differences of works and performances; and to assimilate and blend together all shades and diversities of character. The worst man who possesses, and is allowed the benefit of this attribute of saving faith, is placed by it on a par with the best, and is rendered by it as worthy of salvation as the best. But the case is widely different in the dispensation of a scheme of rewards, as proportioned to works. The first principle of such a dispensation is founded in the difference of personal deserts. Where all are not equal on the score of personal merit, all can never be treated as equal, in the distribution of the rewards of merit. He that has more to plead of merit, will be entitled to claim more of reward; and though all may receive their individual reward in just proportion to their individual deserts, we know that their deserts can never be in the exact proportion of equality; each may have a certain degree of goodness; but some will have more and others will have less, one in comparison of another. Consequently, we may be sure that neither will they be rewarded alike; the more meritorious will be rewarded in an higher proportion, and the less so in a lower.

And such is in fact the representation of scripture, with regard to the rewards proposed in some future kingdom of Christ; not only as all proportional to the merits of the receivers in general, but as differing from each other according to the difference of

those merits in particular. While we meet with assurances, that every man shall stand or fall to his own master, every one shall be rewarded or punished according to his own works, on the one hand; we meet with intimations, that rewards shall not be indiscriminate, but that every one shall receive of the fruit of his own works, and in proportion to his own deservings, on the other. There is such a thing as the joy of the Master, open indeed to the servants in general, but not to every servant alike. There are a right hand and a left, in the kingdom of Christ, reserved for some one of peculiar desert in each instance; and there are degrees and orders of dignities in it, inferior indeed to those, but descending by a regular scale of gradation, from the highest to the lowest. To every one that hath, it is said, shall be given; and he shall be made to abound even more: he that has been faithful in a little, may expect the commission of much; and he who has been more faithful or more successful in the management of a common trust, will be rewarded in proportion more liberally, than he who has been less so: and the reward too, assigned to all in general, however different in each instance in particular, will be exactly proportioned to the deserts of each; the conversion of one pound into ten will be rewarded tenfold; the conversion of another into five, will be rewarded fivefold.

All these declarations surely must concur to satisfy us that there is really some kingdom of Christ, in other words, some future state of being, wherein a reward is proposed to Christians, and a reward in proportion to their works, that is, to their personal deserts. The question is, what kingdom of Christ,

or what future state of being, is this, under which such descriptions as these, if they are ever to be realized, can alone be expected to be so.

It is not the kingdom of Christ in heaven; and therefore it must be the kingdom of Christ on earth; that is, under the millennium. And it is not the kingdom of Christ in heaven—first, because St. Paul has taught us, as I shall have occasion to shew more at large, in the exposition of the parable of the pounds, that in that kingdom, when it comes to be established at the consummation of all things, and after the final judgment, the Son himself, as man, will become subject to the Father; will resign up the authority committed to him in his mediatorial or human capacity; and God will become all in all. What differences of rewards, then, can there be in reserve for Christians as such, in a state of things wherein Christ himself, their Lord and Master, has ceased to exercise his own exalted trust; and all power and majesty and dominion, through the whole extent of being, have been resumed by God the Father, to be divided with Christ only as the Son of God, as the second Person in the blessed Trinity, and as inseparably united with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the same community of glory, essential to the divinity, as well as of nature, in which he had existed from all eternity, before his appearance in the flesh?

Secondly, if the admission of the heirs of salvation into the kingdom of heaven, implies the transition of the human nature into the angelical; if they that are thought worthy to partake of the last resurrection, the general and final one, prior to the immediate consummation of all things, as we have already explained that text, become equal to the

angels ; it seems to be a just and necessary inference, that no degrees and differences of personal rank, estimation, dignity, or the like, can be without presumption and impropriety expected to exist among men, though received into the society of angels, and placed upon a par with them, which do not exist among the angels, or the inhabitants of heaven, at present. If, then, the angels as such are all peers and equals; all placed on the same common footing of power and dignity, goodness and purity; what reason is there to suppose this state of things will be changed, upon the admission of mankind into their society, and that a new relation will be established among the inhabitants of heaven, which never existed there before?

Now, that this assumption is true of the precise character of that relation which subsists at present, and we may conclude, always has subsisted, in the communion or fellowship of the angels, may reasonably be inferred from every intimation about it, which is to be met with either in the Old, or in the New Testament. The doctrine of a succession and scale of orders among the angelic natures, is not a scriptural notion; nor countenanced in any way by the canonical books of scripture. On the contrary, the angels are uniformly spoken of in scripture, under terms and descriptions which apply to them collectively; and must be understood to be meant of them all alike. No other distinction is made between their kinds as such, than that of good, and that of bad, respectively. The good angels in general are all called the sons of God alike; are all represented in prophetic vision, as ranged on the right hand and on the left of the King of heaven, collectively; evidently as his subjects in common, and the inhabitants of

his kingdom in common, and not less so, as peers or equals of each other. They are all described as excellent in strength alike, as fulfilling the commandment, and hearkening to the voice of the words of God, alike; they are all represented as ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation, collectively; all, as the angels of the little ones who believe in Christ, collectively; all, as standing in the presence of God, and beholding the face of the heavenly Father of Christians, collectively; all, as endued with a common nature and essence, equally sublime and exalted, by whatever name it is to be designated in comparison of human dignity, and agreeably to our notions of relative rank and excellence; whether that of thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: for that all these denominations are descriptions of the angels, as such, collectively, and are intended to apply to none of them more than another, no one I think, can doubt.

One archangel, indeed, and only one, is mentioned in scripture, viz. the archangel Michael; whom, nevertheless, the context of those passages, where his name occurs, shews to be none other than our Saviour Christ: and such also is the opinion of the most judicious divines and commentators, that the archangel Michael, whose name is met with in the book of Daniel, and in the Revelation^s, is the Messiah, our Saviour Jesus Christ^t. It was a part of the exaltation of our Saviour, in return for his self-abasement and voluntary humiliation previously, that

^s Dan. x. 13. 21. Rev. xii. 7. Cf. Jude 9.

^t No angel besides is mentioned anywhere in scripture by name, except Gabriel, (Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21. L. i. 19, 26,) Perhaps we may add, *Satan*.

he became the head of the angels, in his human capacity, as well as of every other order and kind of God's creatures; that God gave him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus (that is, the Saviour) every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth^u; thrones and principalities, powers and dominions, things invisible as well as visible, being made subject to him^x, and the gods of heaven, that is, the godlike beings who inhabit heaven, the most exalted of the divine creatures, being commanded to worship him^y.

Perhaps, had the intimations of scripture on this subject been more express, and condescended more to particulars, it might have been found that the only link of connexion between the supreme Deity and the most excellent of his creatures, the spiritual or angelic essences themselves, prior to the scheme of human redemption; was that being, before his fall and transgression, who in consequence of that fall and transgression, became the capital enemy and antagonist of God. In one word, that there was always one, but only one, archangel, as such; the highest and most glorious of created beings, though himself infinitely below the glory and exaltation of the Creator: and that this archangel, of so sublime and elevated, though still a created nature, was Lucifer, Son of the Morning, before his apostasy and fall. The fall of the angels, then, might break the proper connexion between the Creator and the most illustrious of his creatures, the angelic or spiritual essences, which consisted in

^u Philipp. ii. 9, 10.^x Coloss. i. 16.^y Heb. i. 6.

Cf. Ps. xcvi. 7.

the existence of an archangel as such, the perfection and dignity of whose nature occupied the intermediate space between the Creator and the creature; approaching as near to the divine perfections themselves, as what is created can approach to what is not created, and what is finite, however great, to what is infinite; and consequently outtopping and excelling all other orders and kinds of created intelligences, by a distance, if not absolutely immeasurable, yet far beyond the pitch of their own perfections. To restore this union between the Creator and the most spiritual of his creatures, to reestablish the proper link of connexion, the just step of descent from the supreme Deity to the angels themselves, in the person of a new archangel, who yet must be of a nature analogous to their own, might be one purpose of the scheme of redemption, and one reason of the effect produced by it, the exaltation of the human nature in the person of Jesus Christ, to be the head of the angels, as well as of every other order of God's creatures. And in this way, the angels themselves might no less have a personal interest in the œconomy of human redemption, than mankind.

On this subject, however, it is not necessary to dwell at present. That we may return to our argument, and sum up the result of the preceding observations: if there is no difference at present in existence among the angels in heaven; if all are peers in place and favour with God; in power, in majesty, in holiness; what difference can there be among men, when they too shall be assimilated to angels? But if there is to be no difference in the relative equality or inequality of all the future pos-

sessors of the kingdom of heaven; it cannot be in the kingdom of heaven that rewards will either be bestowed or enjoyed, proportional to the deserts of the receivers.

Thirdly; scripture acknowledges no other meritorious ground of admission into the kingdom of heaven, except faith in a crucified Saviour: and as I have argued already, the possession of one and the same qualification, whatever it is supposed to qualify for, must render its possessors so far the same in point of desert, or fitness for any thing, and so far entitled to the proposed good or privilege, attached to that fitness, alike. If then there can be no difference among the candidates for the inheritance of eternal life, with respect to that which is the common ground of the acceptance of each; if all are to be received or rejected, as heirs of salvation, for one and the same reason alike; what difference can there be in the nature of their estimation, or how can they fail to be each treated, and therefore each rewarded, alike?

Dr. Paley, in a passage of his work on the Evidences of Christianity, had occasion to notice the objection of an infidel writer, that there could be very little personal distinction of worthiness and unworthiness, between the best man condemned to hell, and the worst admitted into heaven: to which he replied, that there may be as little in their personal situation also. This answer appears to me a very unfortunate one. We may perhaps conceive that under certain circumstances, with respect even to the final reprobation and punishment of the wicked, it may be consistent with the Divine justice to make such and such distinctions, in the disposal

and treatment of the objects of its wrath, corresponding to such and such differences, in the degrees or complexions of their personal guilt (though I am far from considering this to be absolutely certain): but we cannot conceive, consistently with the doctrine of salvation by faith, that any difference can be made in the dispensation of rewards, or in the selection of the objects of the gift of eternal life, proportioned to the difference of their personal deserts. The possession of a common faith must make them all equal in a common good quality; and where that possession alone is regarded as the ground of merit, it must make them all equal in point of reward. If any are to be saved by their faith, they must all be to be saved by it alike; and if all are to be saved alike, for the sake of their faith, they must all be to be accepted, and therefore to be rewarded alike.

A faith or trust in the promises of God, through Christ, absolutely given and absolutely to be received, is the supplementary provision designed to compensate for the necessary defectiveness of human righteousness and perfection, as compared with the standard which would be proposed to the attainment of moral agents, on the principle of a reward to be strictly commensurate with works. This standard is nothing short of perfection. It was the standard which the Israelites of old were commanded to come up to; and it is the standard still proposed, as the rule and measure of excellence, to Christians: with this difference, however, between the case of the Israelite of old, and that of the Christian at present; that whereas he was required not only to aim at, but also to attain to, that standard, if he was to hope for the Divine favour and blessing; the Christian

is commanded to aspire at it, it is true, but he is not commanded absolutely to reach it, upon pain of the displeasure of God, and the forfeiture of every privilege before enjoyed by him as one of the people of God: and whereas the Israelite of old, in defect of his coming up to the standard proposed, had no definite substitute to trust to; the Christian at present, notwithstanding the failure of his utmost endeavours to attain to the perfection required from him, has still the benefit of a well assured confidence in the promise of acceptance by God, through faith in Jesus Christ.

If moral agents are to be entitled to a reward at the hands of their Creator, out of regard to their own works and their own deservings, and to such a reward as is proposed to their enjoyment in heaven; their works and their deserts must still necessarily be in strict reciprocal proportion to the nature of the reward, which is claimed as their just equivalent; even though they may be no more. Now the reward, as we may take it for granted, if it be such as will be enjoyed in heaven, and constitute the happiness of all eternity, is something transcendent and almost infinite in its kind: therefore equally transcendent and excellent ought to be the personal merit, which is strictly to be entitled to it. For surely nothing of immeasurable or infinite value and dignity in itself, can be claimed or expected in the way of payment or reward, as the just equivalent of a finite, and incommensurable, degree of excellence or desert. Too much must not be expected or received, on the principle of the discharge of a debt, or the just proportioning of one thing in return for another, no more than too little. So that, could the principle of

strict retributive justice be applicable to the dealings of God with his own moral creatures, who are bound to render the utmost obedience to his will, of which they are capable, merely because it is *his* will, and they are *his* creatures; and who if they could do every thing which he required of them, with the utmost punctuality and exactness, would still be obliged in reason, as well as from piety and humility, to confess that they were unprofitable servants; they had done no more than it was their duty to do: yet even on such a principle, the Deity could not be expected to communicate a share of his own infinite bliss, within the kingdom of heaven, to any of his creatures, on the score of desert, who did not partake of his own infinite goodness; who were not “holy as he was holy; and perfect as he was perfect.”

Where, however, the abstract standard of excellence, proposed as the meritorious ground of acceptance, to any of the moral creatures of God, is nothing short of the perfection of his own nature; it is idle to talk of the possibility that any of those creatures, however pure and exalted, should actually come up to it; much less such of his moral creatures as mankind, in their present corrupt and degenerate state, and so far gone from their original righteousness itself. The utmost advances of the creature under any circumstances, must fall infinitely below the excellence of the Creator; and much more, the utmost advances of the best and most perfect among men. Whatever differences, then, there might be in the degrees of approximation to the abstract point of perfection, made by one order of the divine creatures in comparison of another; or by one good

man, among the rational human creation, in comparison of others ; yet if the point itself was at an infinite distance above ; and the advances towards it, however considerable in themselves, and however discriminated one from another, were still finite ; they would all fall equally short of the pinnacle they aimed at, they would all be at the same distance below the standard of absolute perfection. It is peculiar to the essence of infinity, that nothing, however great in measure and degree, which is notwithstanding finite, can be compared with it ; and that the greatest relative quantity, which is still finite, is as much behind it, as the least. If referred then to the common standard of the divine perfections, as the requisite and only qualification for their admission to partake in the happiness of the divine nature, on the score of pure personal worthiness and desert ; the best of men would come as far short of the glory of God, as the worst ; and the best would have as little right, and as little reason, to expect admission to the blessed privilege of eternal life, as the worst.

What is it, therefore, which opens the doors of heaven, and bestows a right to a share in the joys of the kingdom of heaven, if not on all mankind, yet on the heirs of salvation in particular ? A pure, an absolute, a total, an unqualified and simple reliance on the promises of God, through Christ ; in one word, faith or trust, in the gift of God through Christ. The righteousness of Christ was absolute and perfect : it came up to the height of the standard proposed by God, as the ground or condition of acceptance on the score of works or desert. And for the sake of the absolute, meritorious righteousness and satisfaction of Christ ; if those who believe in

him, will exert the utmost of their own ability, and do the best of their own endeavours, to make their calling and election sure for themselves, and trust to the grace and free gift of God for the rest; he has promised to accept and reward their imperfect obedience, as if it were perfect; as if they themselves came up to the standard of his own appointment; as if the righteousness of Christ, which was plenary and satisfactory, and on which they rest and support themselves merely, were actually their own.

If such be really the case, it follows that the great practical obligation of Christians, in this their state of probation, is not, as is commonly supposed and taught, first to believe and then to act; but contrariwise, to act first, and to believe afterwards: that is, we ought not to begin with faith, and end with works, but to begin with works, and end with faith. It is idle to think of divorcing faith from works; or works from faith; as if either could subsist, or either could be sufficient, without the other. The only question concerns the order, which a sound and scriptural view of the state of the case, as well as the reason of the thing, would lead us to establish between them. And without entering at large upon this question, the discussion of which would require too much time, I have said enough to satisfy an unprejudiced and impartial reader, that if faith be really the supplementary provision by which the actual defectiveness of human works and deservings is rendered virtually perfect in the eyes of God; works must not spring from faith, but faith from works; we must do what we can for and by ourselves, before we trust, or think of trusting to God, for the rest, through Christ; we must live, and labour, and act,

as though our salvation depended on our own endeavours and on our own deservings; we must believe and hope, we must trust and rely, as though (what, indeed, is truly the case) it depended entirely upon God.

It follows also, that as faith or trust in Christ, a simple and absolute reliance on the promises of God, made and conveyed to mankind through him; is the only thing which in every individual instance can supply the lack of personal righteousness, and raise what is finite, by the virtue of an imputed efficacy, to the standard of what is infinite: the highest as well as the lowest degree of mere human improvement are equally, and to the same extent, indebted to it, for those grounds of their acceptance with God, on which he bestows the free gift of eternal life. All are raised to the same level by it; and all were just at the same distance from that level, without it. When measured by the proposed standard of infinite perfection, we may say in the words of Moses with reference to the relative equality or inequality of the proportion of manna, gathered by each of the people daily, before it was meted by the homer of the sanctuary—he that has most of personal desert, of his own obtaining, has nothing over; has no more than he wants; and when eked out by the overflowing abundance of the righteousness of Christ, through faith, he that has least of mere human merit, has no lack; has still as much as is wanted.

With reason, then, may we conclude that there can be no difference of the rewards, or of the kinds and degrees of the happiness, to be expected, after the consummation of all things, in the everlasting

kingdom of heaven ; while there is no difference in the relative desert, or the comparative estimation, of those who will be admitted into their enjoyment. But we have seen, that there is certainly some other kingdom of Christ, some other state and condition of an happy and immortal existence, in which rewards are promised in proportion to works ; and by supposing differences of works, suppose differences of deserving also. If this kingdom is not the kingdom of heaven, it must be the millenary. The happiness of this last kingdom is doubtless great ; and the privilege of partaking therein is a privilege of inestimable value : but in comparison of the felicities of heaven, even the joys of the millennium may be just as inferior, (and even more so,) as the amount of happiness on earth at present, is below the standard of a paradise of delights. It is not, therefore, inconsistent with the analogy of this intermediate dispensation, in other respects, that it should also be the appointed œconomy and duration of things, in which and for which, the rewards of well doing will be in proportion to the deserts of the agents ; and Jews or Christians generally will be differently accepted and preferred, as they differ in personal claims to estimation. Under such a dispensation, it seems both natural and probable that one who has sown more liberally, should reap also more liberally ; and a proficiency in goodness of one hundredfold, be rewarded in a greater proportion, than one of sixtyfold ; and that, than one of thirtyfold ; as it seems, in fact, only just that they should. Rewards, described and specified under the ideas of seats of an higher or a lower order in the scale of dignity ; of thrones and jurisdictions ; of temporal authority and dominion ; of preferment

in the service of a Master, and of one office of domestic or secular trust and confidence, rewarded by another of the same kind and a greater; have a direct analogy to the state of things upon earth, and in society constituted as it is at present; and may therefore hold good of such an œconomy as the millenary, which we have shewn, will still be a social state, resembling in general that which has always existed in the world; but cannot, with any propriety, be conceived to apply to a just estimation of the character and constitution of the kingdom of God, through all eternity, in the heavens.

A general assurance, that the present state of things on earth will sometime be superseded by another in heaven, is certainly plainly delivered in scripture: but upon the nature, and circumstances, of that state itself, no particular light is communicated; scripture has observed a profound silence. And, perhaps, for reasons which might easily be conceived, it could not do otherwise than be silent. It was not to beings of time and sense, like men, in the present state of their nature and faculties, that an intelligible, much less an adequate idea of the joys of heaven, or of the truth and reality of a spiritual immortality, could have been conveyed; however desirable it might otherwise have been to communicate it.

It follows, therefore, that the peculiar hopes and expectations of future happiness proposed in the word of God, as the great encouragement to the patience and perseverance of Christians—which hopes, with their subject matter, as far as they descend into particulars, are conveyed to our appre-

hensions under the images of sense—must be understood to refer primarily, if not exclusively, to the rewards which are promised beneath the millenary kingdom of Christ. And hence, another practical benefit of the expectation of a millennium is this: that it constitutes the proper support and consolation of the church, under all circumstances of its state of pilgrimage and probation, in this life, ordinary and extraordinary; but more especially, in times and on occasions of trouble and distress; when every other comfort and protection seem to have been withdrawn from it, except what it derives from its own fortitude, constancy, and patience, as animated by a well-founded confidence in the promises of its Redeemer.

The church of Christ, militant here on earth, has undergone many rude assaults, and passed through many fiery ordeals, in its progress onwards to the church triumphant in another state of being: but if we can penetrate with any degree of light into the darkness of futurity, or gather any one conclusion with certainty from the disclosures of prophecy, it is this; that the worst of its trials, though likewise the last; the most violent of the assaults, as well as the concluding one, which it has to sustain—is yet to come.

The fathers of the church were unanimous in this opinion, among others relating to the same subject; that the appearance and rise of the Antichrist would be accompanied by the persecution of the followers of the true Christ; and his kingdom would be established on the ruins of the church of the true Christ. And indeed, if the Antichrist is really such a person, as they thought him to be, it is impossible but that his

rise and ascendancy, so long as they last, should be accompanied by an effect like this. The religion of Jesus Christ, as such, cannot exist in conjunction with the worship of Antichrist; and if *this* is to be established in the world, whether for a longer or a shorter time, *that* must be superseded and extinguished, for the same length of time at least.

And with respect to the probability of such an event—our Saviour's ominous inquiry; "Nevertheless when the Son of man is come, shall he find the "faith on the earth^s?"—St. Paul's *apostasy* or *falling away*, which must precede the arrival of the end, and the second coming of Christ; the man of sin, exalting himself above all that is called God, and sitting in the temple of God, himself as God; the little horn of Daniel, whose look was more stout than his fellows—and whose mouth spake blasphemy against the Most High; the beast, whose mark was received by the majority of mankind, in the Revelation, and whose image was set up as the object of idolatrous worship to his followers: all these in-

^s Luke xviii. 8. Harm. P. iv. 48. We have this text quoted, with the above construction of its meaning, in a very ancient document, the Acta of Pionius, Ruinart. Acta Martyrum, 146. cap. 12: Ubinam terrarum, Filius Hominis postquam venerit, fidem poterit invenire?

In the *Scriptores Deperditi*, i. pars 1. 133—138. we have a large extract from Eusebius' Commentary on Luke xvii: in which the universal apostasy in the time of Antichrist; the establishment of his religion instead of that of Christ; the persecution by him of the remnant of the true church, before the time of the end; are all very plainly supposed or asserted, as unquestionable matters of futurity. It is needless to add that all the fathers, whom I know of, millennarians or antimillennarians, concurred in the same belief. Cf. Sulp. Sev. *Histor. Sacræ*, ii. 47: Dialog. ii. 16.

timations speak the same language, and lead to the same inference in general; that the world has yet sometime or other to witness a stranger phenomenon than any thing heretofore seen; even no less surprising an event, than the public renunciation of the religion of the true Christ, by the great mass of mankind, and the substitution of another in its stead, which whether Christian or not, in name, will not be that of the true Christ, but of the Antichrist.

If there are any good and pious Christians, who, so far from apprehending as possible the temporary extinction of the Christian religion, in that part of the world which it has hitherto possessed, are looking forward with hope and confidence, to the extension of its empire even in climes and among nations, as yet strangers to the gospel or averse to its sway; the assurance of an event, so contrary to these anticipations, will no doubt appear the most incredible thing imaginable. To such anticipations, however, as founded neither in the reason of the thing, nor in scripture, I have returned a sufficient answer, as I hope, in the second part of the present Discourse. It is not necessary to repeat here, what was then said. I shall qualify the profession of my belief in the futurity of so extraordinary an event, as a general apostasy from Christianity, sometime or other, before the end of the world, only by admitting that I do not, and could not, undertake to specify the causes by which it will be brought to pass. On this subject also, something has been said before. No doubt the signs of the times are full of an ominous and melancholy import to a reflecting observer; sufficient to make him fear the worst, even for the permanency and stability of Christianity

itself. The causes which are really destined to work its overthrow, if such an event is hereafter to take place, cannot perhaps be altogether of a natural or merely secondary description; and supernatural agency may be someway concerned in the effect also. But whatever they may be, their true nature will no doubt become sensible enough, when their operation begins to be too palpable to be mistaken. The mystery of iniquity was at work in the time of St. Paul: and it must continue to work, as it has always done since, to the time of the end; only with an efficacy more and more perceptible, as the end itself approaches.

Nor would I be understood to say, that though the religion of Antichrist may be established for a time on the ruins of the religion of Jesus Christ, the world itself may after all cease to be nominally Christian. It is essential to Antichrist, as the exact counterpart of Jesus Christ, that he appear in his *name* as well as in his *character*: and therefore his followers, in some sense or other, may yet be called and reputed Christians. But an apostasy there must be of some kind, even before the appearance of Antichrist: and that apostasy seems to imply a general renunciation of Christianity.

Nor is it a necessary consequence of the ascendancy of the empire of Antichrist, that no vestiges of the true church of Christ, nor any genuine professors of the religion of Jesus Christ, will remain in the world during the continuance of his ascendancy. There must be believers in Jesus Christ, even under such circumstances, to furnish the martyrs and confessors of that calamitous period; there must be a remnant of the true church somewhere,

if Antichrist is to have ought to persecute: and some there will be, amidst the general apostasy, as the book of Revelation tells us, who "will neither receive the mark of the beast, nor worship his image."

Still less would I be understood to insinuate that even so melancholy and extraordinary an event, as the renunciation of a genuine Christianity by the vast majority of its nominal professors, is not itself an occurrence from which good and pious Christians may derive comfort and encouragement, when they look upon it as one of the most certain and infallible presages of the approach of the end, and of the time of the enjoyment of their own reward. As surely as the empire of the rival and antagonist of Jesus Christ shall have been established in the world, apparently the most securely; so surely will its overthrow and destruction be the nearer at hand. And hence it is, that the expectation of the millennium, that blissful period of peace and tranquillity, which will follow on the downfall of Antichrist, may justly be proposed as pregnant with hope and consolation to the church of God in the latter times: an hope and consolation, which as peculiarly designed for the support and assurance of the faithful in seasons of difficulty and distress, we may reasonably suppose will grow stronger and more lively, and be more full of comfort and encouragement, in proportion as there is greater need of both. The near approach of their true Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to assert his own sovereignty over every rival, and to claim and redeem his own from the power of their great enemy, will be the main stay and support of such of his faithful servants as shall be placed under the cir-

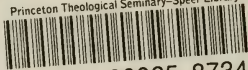
cunstances of so severe and unexampled a trial, as that which yet awaits his church before the end of the world. The expectation of a millennium may then be the belief to which they will fly for refuge against the violence of the storm which assails them; and which will serve as an anchor, sure and steadfast, to buoy up and confirm their souls. Whatsoever tends to *weaken* their confidence in this belief, so far weakens and impairs the passive resources of the church in the days of the great apostasy, when she will want every resource that she can command; and whatsoever tends to *rob* her of so valuable and cheering a belief *altogether*, does so far prepare the way for the success of Antichrist himself, and tends to expose the true servants and followers of Jesus Christ, almost naked and defenceless, to the malice and violence of their Master's capital enemy, and their own.

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